the PARIS REVIEW

15

THORNTON WILDER

an interview

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ON MESCALINE

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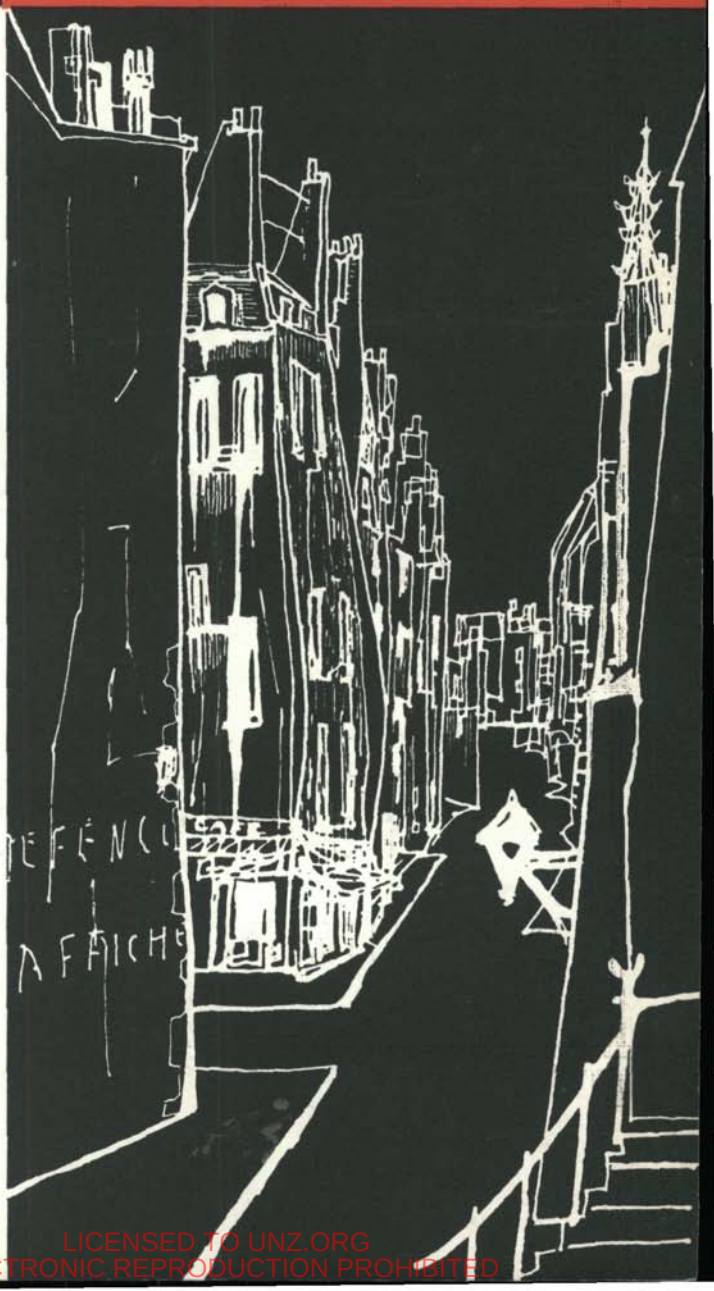

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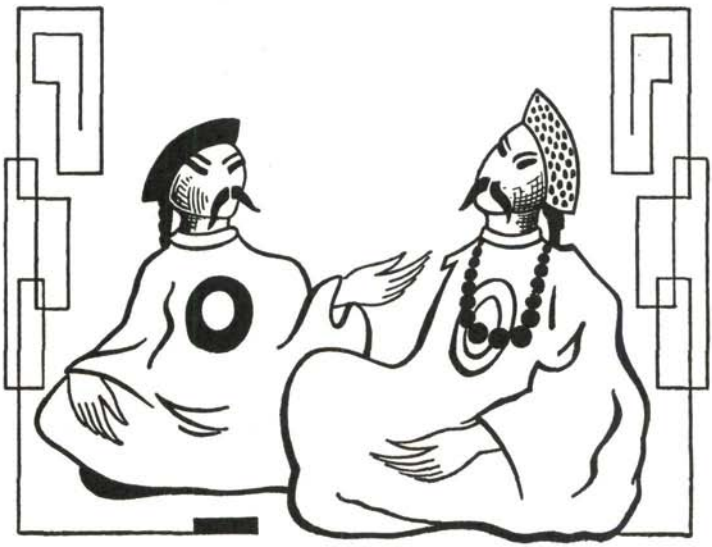

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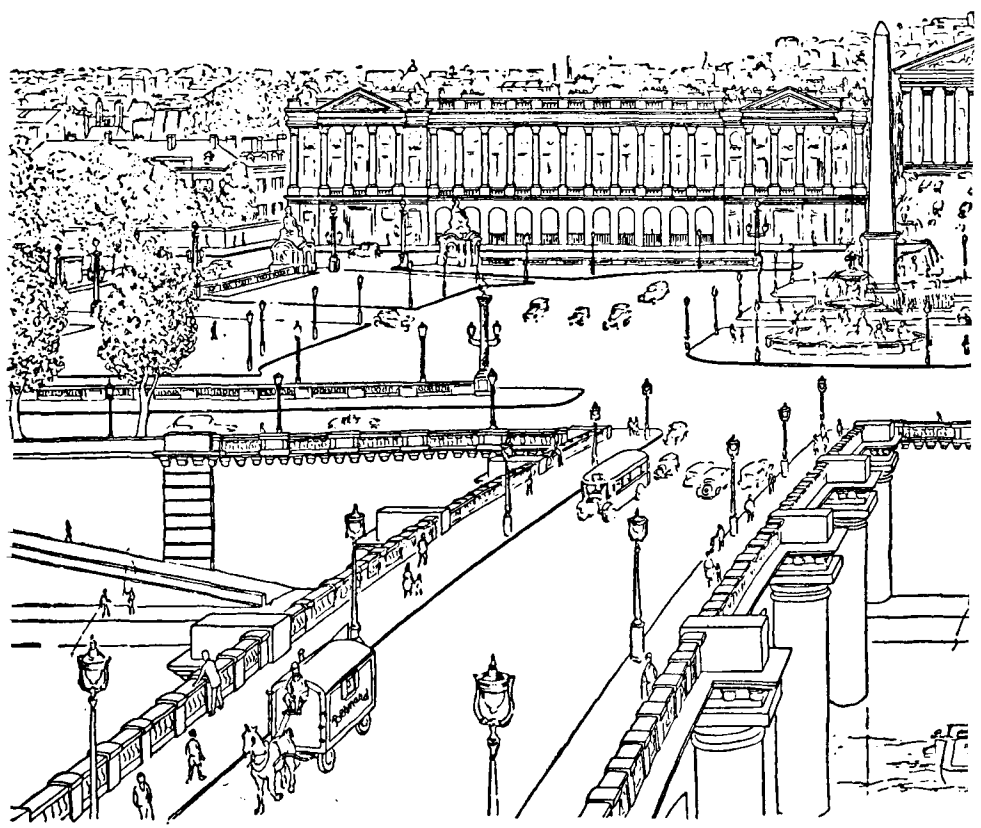

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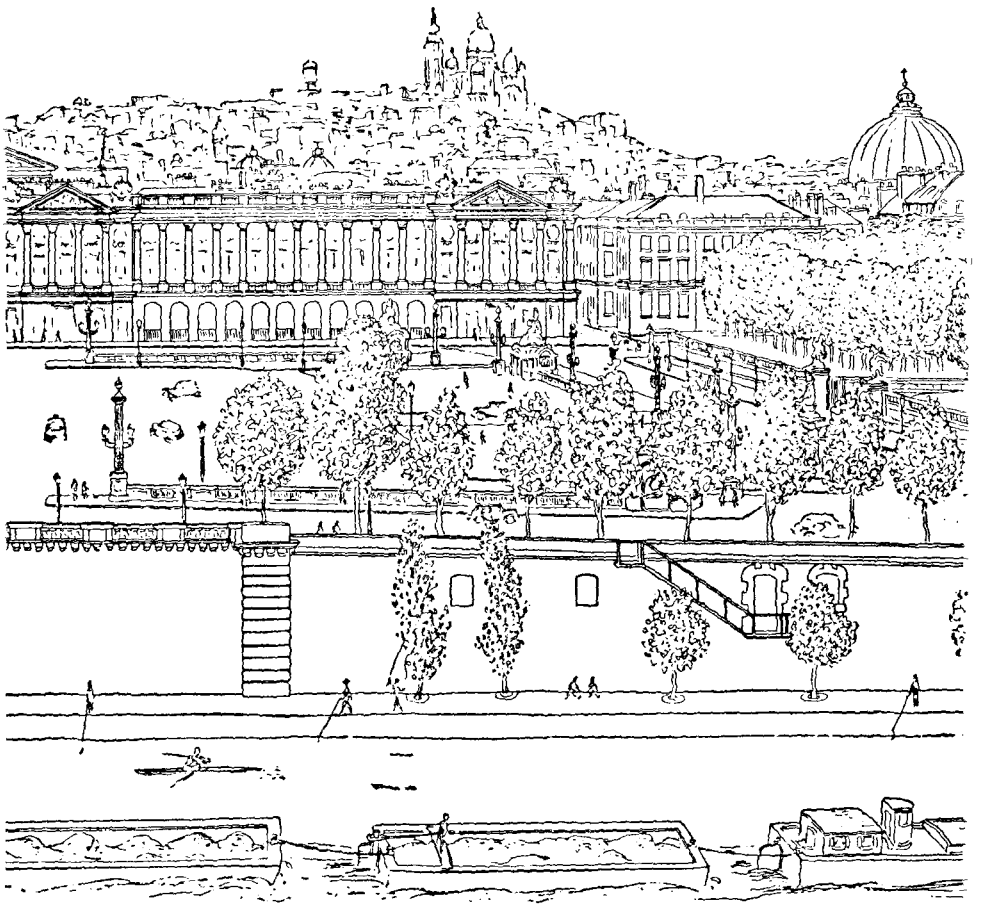

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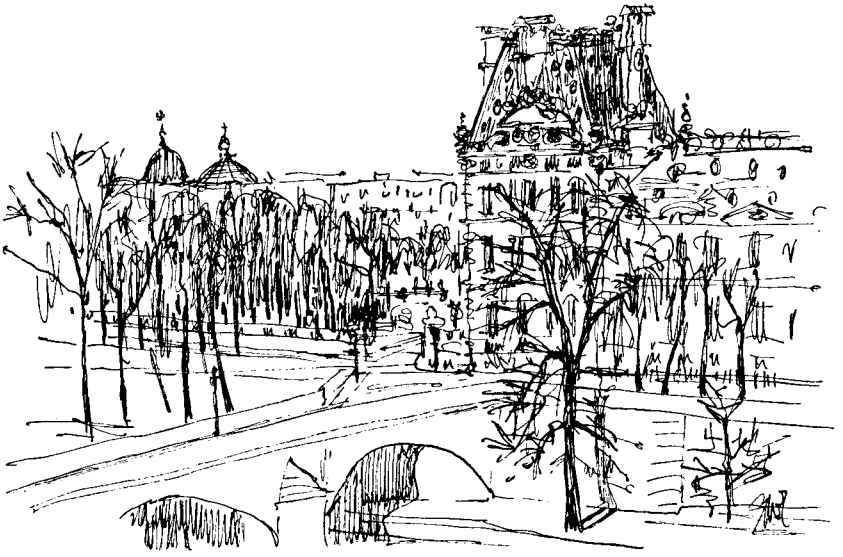

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HUGHES RUDD

THE FISHERS

AFTER Mr. Fisher lost his job as a brakeman on the Katy he bought a second-hand Chevrolet sedan and drove it as a dime taxi for a while, but there wasn't enough money in it, so he decided he would make pies.

Nobody in the neighborhood knew why he happened to think of pies; nobody asked, and he didn't say. Mr. Fisher wasn't a friendly man. He was big, brakeman-sized, and his neck was red and scaly. It was said he once killed a hobo with the brake club like a baseball bat he used to turn the boxcar brake wheels; he hadn't meant to kill him, but he was loyal to the Katy; he knew his duty.

The Fishers were the only family in the neighborhood which dealt with Sears & Roebuck through the mail. There were three Fisher sons: Homer, seventeen; Weldon, twelve, and Raymond, eight, but the packages were never for them. The first thing Mr. Fisher ordered from the catalogue was a set of cobbler's tools for repairing the family shoes. There were five pairs of iron feet on little columns out in the back-yard shed, diminishing in size from Mr. Fisher's mighty sole to Raymond's little one and even after the iron feet were too small for the boys Mr. Fisher still used them. It didn't seem to make much difference.

After the cobbler's tools Mr. Fisher bought a huge steam pressure cooker for Mrs. Fisher to use for canning. It stood in a corner of the screened-in back porch when not in action, like a nickel plated kettle drum. And then came a set of barber shears and scissors to cut the family hair and an ugly apparatus of black iron which seized a tire and spread it open so Mr. Fisher could work on the inside of the casing with his repair

–Drawing by Albert Eisenlau

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kit. He bought all these things while he was still a brakeman on the Katy, before times got tough, as though he knew it was going to be like that and was getting ready to hold out as long as he could.

The equipment for the pies was the most elaborate of all. There were four square ovens, with stern, heavy handles on the front like those on a locomotive's firebox door; there were deep metal tubs to do the mixing in, and great steel baking sheets dented to hold dozens of pies. The pies were the nickel size which was very popular at that time. Mr. Fisher fitted the back of the sedan with wooden racks where the finished pies rested in paper plates during delivery, and he was in business.

It was a family undertaking, conceived in silent desperation, and the only one who enjoyed it was Raymond. He was very religious then, a member of the Baptist Young People's Union at the Highland Baptist church a block away, and he liked carrying the little pies back and forth. He wanted to be a preacher someday.

Homer was the mean one, everybody said: he was always making trouble. He hated the pie-making; he bought a five-dollar guitar and a set of lessons and told everybody he wanted to be a cowboy on the radio. Mr. Fisher didn't like it; he whipped him until he got too big, and after that he would refuse to let Homer into the house some nights when he came home late. They used to wake up the whole neighborhood.

Homer found a job in a poolroom down on the square and in the afternoons, when the pie-making was at its highest pitch, he would open the door of the bedroom where he slept with his brothers and run down the hall and out the back door before his father could catch him. Then he would lean against the screen door while his father tried to push it open, both of them cursing at each other and shouting until you could hear it clear down at Hardin's Grocery. The family never used the front door at all.

After a while Mr. Fisher would have to go back to his pies and Homer would walk around the house and down the driveway to the street, combing his hair, which he greased

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with Crisco every day. He had a pointed, mean face like a weasel, with beady little eyes like a weasel, and he carried a snap-open knife with a four-inch blade in his pocket. In the summertime the Crisco would start to run before he got to the car line and he would stand there, mopping his forehead with a dirty handkerchief, darting his little eyes around like he was in Chicago or St. Louis, waiting for the street car like a weasel in a tight, twelve-dollar suit. He didn't act like a cowboy at all.

Weldon didn't say much; he wanted to be just like Homer. Raymond despaired of him, screamed at him out in the garage as they loaded pies into the sedan, wept over him. There were dozens of empty one-gallon mineral oil jars stacked around the base of the garage walls and Raymond had to be careful when he was screaming at Weldon or they got knocked over and broken. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher both suffered from chronic constipation; it was their only luxury. They consumed surprising amounts of mineral oil from Sears & Roebuck and every few months Mr. Fisher returned the empties for a refund.

Nobody in the neighborhood ever tasted one of Mr. Fisher's pies. They were never given away nor eaten at home, and people in the neighborhood never went into the places which bought the pies from Mr. Fisher. They were artificial-looking confections, with a broad cone of grainy, hard meringue on top, like plaster. It was impossible to see what was inside, under the meringue, but there were all kinds of fillings: some days it was coconut, other times banana cream or pecan, and always they were a nickel each and quite durable; they held up for days on the counters of the restaurants where Mr. Fisher sold them.

Every day after school Raymond and Weldon worked with their parents, making the pies, but they never ate any. The pies were ammunition, and not to be fired off at random; the enemy was on the porch, fingering the doorknobs; every round must count. After all, Mr. Fisher's pies retailed for a nickel each; he had to sell them for three cents. As the country slowed, grumbled and fell silent, he was out in the sedan all day long, not coming home until nine or ten o'clock at night

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sometimes, and once he drove clear to Temple, twenty-five miles away, trying to get the bus station there to handle his pies, but they wouldn't do it. And every day Raymond and Weldon would start to work as soon as they got home, mixing, carrying pies to the roaring ovens and from the ovens to the racks, washing the tubs and steel sheets amid clang and clatter. There was always something to do. The light over the back door burned late every night, and the slap-slap of the screen could be heard when others were in bed, for not everyone chose to fight 1932 in this fashion.

When they were finally finished for the night Mr. and Mrs. Fisher would go into their bedroom at the front of the house and Raymond and Weldon would go into their room at the back. Weldon shared a bed with Homer, but he was always asleep by the time the poolhall employee came home. Raymond had a canvas army cot to himself, and after he undressed except for his underwear he would sit on the cot and look at the colored Bible pictures the preacher gave him, talking about them to Weldon, trying to get him interested.

But, "I'm on git me a *git*-tar," Weldon would interrupt in his dull voice, and he would look at Homer's pillow, covered with the dark splotches the Crisco made, and that would make Raymond mad.

"No, you ain't neither," he would say firmly, pursing his lips and looking at his brother. "You ain't gone do no such of a thing." He was eight years old and the preacher had told him that before too long he would become a real member of the church. "We gone buy seeds with that money," he would say, although there was no money, "and one uh them little plows with a wheel on her," for there was a picture of a proud, compact little garden plow in the catalogue and Raymond wanted a garden in the back lot, so they need no longer buy vegetables from Hardin's Grocery. "*He* won't leave you buy no *git*-tar, anyways."

"Mama on make him," Weldon would answer, still looking at the Crisco spots, and Raymond would sigh with exasperation and put his pictures away in a shoebox, then go to bed. It wasn't easy for a BYPU member in this house.

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Mrs. Fisher frequently made promises to Weldon and Homer but never to Raymond, since he never asked her for anything. She was a silent woman who never left the house, a small, female version of Homer's weaselness, shuffling from room to room in red felt bedroom slippers. Like her husband, she came from a family of cotton sharecroppers, one of many children born to a dark, brooding couple of no education and apparently less imagination, whose children, the sons and daughters of the pioneers, resembled them exactly. She had never understood town ways and had no curiosity about them, nor had Mr. Fisher, although his work on the Katy and then with the pies took him out into the town every day. They were suspicious of it, not seeing it as merely an extension, a distillation of the cotton farmers who surrounded it, and so Mrs. Fisher never went out into it at all and Mr. Fisher did so narrowly, almost blindly, unaware of gossip or humor or politics, never even reading the paper. People who passed on the sidewalk in front of the house often saw Mrs. Fisher peering at them around the drawn windowshade in her bedroom, and if they were neighbors and went to the back door on some neighbor business she talked to them through the screen, saying as little as was necessary for the business but not unfriendly and even letting them into the house if the business made that necessary, but she never called at the other back doors in the neighborhood. The neighbors did not consider her especially remarkable or eccentric, however; they were accustomed to such people. At that time there were Fishers in every neighborhood, all over the town.

However, in one respect this particular Mr. Fisher, this former brakeman for the Katy railroad was regarded as strangely out of character, above the normal run of Fishers: he was not a drinking man. The town's Fishers, and certainly the brakemen on the Katy, were whiskey drinkers; it set them apart like their overalls and pointed felt hats, forced into that strange, witches' shape on broom sticks, while the felt was wet. The other people in the town drank home brew which they concocted in their garages. And even that was primarily for summer use, although there were exceptions, of course; but

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the town's Fishers drank illegal whiskey the whole year 'round; it eased them.

But not the silent, pie-making Mr. Fisher. It was considered odd, a little too respectable; it bordered on sanctimonious display. And yet, Mr. Fisher did not attend the Highland Baptist church nor any other church. He swore, and violently; he was as vulgar as his antecedents. He broke wind in front of his family or even among the lady shoppers in Hardin's Grocery, if he felt like it; after all, what difference did it make? And always he was dark and sullen, like those violent ancestors, dissatisfied and vaguely resentful, unarmed against his enemy. Not a churchman at all.

But, there it was: he was not a drinking man. He abhorred it. When Homer came home drunk at the age of fourteen his father beat him with his broad, stout belt, a piece of leather as heavy and stiff as harness. After that Homer did not come home drunk; he stayed away until he was sober, vomiting in the distempered men's room of the Phoenix cafe on the square.

And women; Mr. Fisher warned Homer about women in such filthy language that it seemed impossible he had ever married, that he had ever brought himself in contact with the diseased, grasping, lying tribe and produced Homer, Weldon and Raymond. When Raymond heard his father lecturing Homer in this way it drove him to furious tears, he would rush out of the house with angry cries and sit in the garage or the shed which joined it, sobbing and promising himself holy vengeance against Mr. Fisher; he prayed that his huge, monstrous parent would be delivered into his hands for righteous, wrathful punishment of the Old Testament variety. And then Mr. Fisher would shout his name and it would be time to start working on the pies and Raymond would go back to his labor, his face stained with tears and dirt and cobwebs. At such times he worked frenziedly, rallying Weldon with fierce shouts, darting from the ovens to the racks in the sedan, scrubbing pans like a small wild man. It seemed that he hoped to outwit his father's vulgarity (although he did not know it as such) with this family labor, this community effort against charity, and in exact proportion to the humbling of his father,

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to do homage to his mother, that peering, shuffling, weasel-faced woman, member of the caste which Homer was warned to beware. Mother, and little Jesus, and the evil men!

Homer, of course, found girls: a succession of waitresses from the Phoenix cafe or others like it, places that were dim, smelling of chili and long-dead grease, with corrugated iron awnings over the sidewalk out front; or girls from the pecan factory, they who worked in stifling heat in summer and not at all in winter since the pecans come in hot weather, girls in loose blue cotton smocks shelling mountains of pecans, carefully picking the meats out whole since broken ones were forfeit in the day's poundage score, their fingers stained a light brown, like Homer's own nicotined fingers. He took them to the Cotton Palace park in summer, and in winter (in the battered, rattling old Ford of a friend) to unpainted farmhouses out in the country, where whiskey was sold. Finally, inevitably, he found one he loved, a Dolores or Rosemary or Dot, and he frequently displayed his four-inch knife in the farmhouse fights, defending the one he had chosen from speech like his own but which was not to be tolerated because it was not his own, and then, equally finally, inevitably, he wanted to bring the girl to the house while Mr. Fisher was away. He told his mother he wanted to have friends at the house for a party.

Mrs. Fisher, not understanding, since this was something she knew nothing of, agreed to plot with him against Mr. Fisher. There was no question of revealing the plan to the husband and father; they refused even to think of such a disaster. Therefore the party must take place in the afternoon, while Mr. Fisher was abroad in town, selling his pies, and must be ended, the guests gone, at a safe hour.

At first Mrs. Fisher was pleasantly stirred by the idea of Homer's party, then frightened. It roused her from the patient, unquestioning gloom in which she unwittingly lived; it was the unknown, the intangible, qualities she perhaps had known in childhood but never since, for in the Fisher household intangibles were not considered, they did not exist in any consciousness save possibly Raymond's nor did any mind

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other than his dwell on the unknown. Conversation between parents and children was short, monosyllabic, and always of the immediate present. It had been so in the home of her own parents and Mrs. Fisher was not aware that it could or should be otherwise. But now Homer's plan shook her, she felt for the first time that he was "different," that he was moving forward and away from her blood, from something considered normal until now toward something indefinably better, and she was glad he had found his job in the poolroom, among the town people he understood and valued, the restless, active, talky town people. Change (so dreaded, so unwanted, always so near in 1932) must in this matter be good, and her mind moved slowly, unevenly, stiff with disuse, over this aspect of her son and his life in the pool room on the square, unknown, but so suddenly present and requiring action.

She was not sure what was to make this party but she did not ask Homer. He had told her what he wanted: a party, since other people had them; she had agreed and he had gone off to his poolroom. She might have conceived of it and even tried to form it on some vague remembrance of a country funeral or wedding, with the men in the yard and the women in the kitchen, if Raymond had not sensed her mistake and corrected it.

"You on have ice cream?" he asked, looking up at her. "That's what they have at BYPU parties."

Mrs. Fisher looked down at him with her beady, weasel eyes, duller eyes than Homer's but unmistakably animal-like, wild fear and hate hidden behind the dullness and dumb patience.

"Mm," she said, looking down at her youngest son.

"And one uh them white cakes," Raymond said. "With green ice cream. They can sit in the front room and play the radio."

So it was decided, and on the appointed day Raymond took the limp dollar his mother gave him and walked to Hardin's Grocery, where he bought a white cake packaged in cardboard and cellophane and a quart of lime ice cream. Then he walked home and gave his mother the change from the dollar,

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put the ice cream in the ice box, the cake on the kitchen table, combed his hair with water and sat down in the kitchen to wait for Homer's party. Weldon stood at a window in the front room and Mrs. Fisher posted herself behind her bedroom windowshade. They peered around the shades, watching for Homer's arrival. Raymond sat in the kitchen, reading his BYPU magazine with thudding heart, longing yet fearful, and Mr. Fisher was in a Mexican cafe, staring heavily at the counter while he waited for the proprietor to buy or reject his pies, ignoring the rapid, spattering Spanish tongues and the smells of tacos, chili pepper sauce and fried rice, thinking about his old job on the Katy and how well he had performed in it.

Weldon grunted and ran into his mother's bedroom.

"They comin'," he said. "They in a car," raising the shade in front of his mother before she could stop him and she saw a Ford roadster, rakish and battered, turning into the yard.

"Here!" she said, jerking down the shade, and she raised her arm as though she would strike Weldon. She looked at him, then shuffled into the front room and sat down on the sofa, getting up at once to turn on the radio and then return to the sofa. Weldon took the chair by the radio and they sat silently, not moving, not looking at each other, their hands on their thighs as the radio hummed, warming up. They heard the metallic slam of the car doors in the backyard and then the slap of the screen door and voices in the kitchen, coming down the hall, and Homer entered the front room followed by another boy and two girls. The radio hummed powerfully and a man's voice started talking about Purina feeds.

For perhaps ten seconds after the foursome entered the room Mrs. Fisher and Weldon could smell them. There was a stale, rancid odor about them, of grease-impregnated clothing hung too long in a closed closet, the smell of a bed which has not been made for days or weeks, but it faded quickly into the usual close, almost fetid smell of the house and the room's first occupants thought nothing of it. Mrs. Fisher did not look at the young people when she was introduced to them

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by Homer in a quick, unfinished way, nor did she speak. She continued to sit with her hands on her thighs, her slippered feet close together, gazing steadily and calmly at the wall. She looked small on the bright blue plush of the sofa, and when the girls sat down on each side of her the cushions rose under her, lifting her feet from the floor. She paid no attention. Weldon, following his mother's example or stiff with self-consciousness, sat as he had before, staring straight ahead as though he had been falsely accused of a crime and was not going to talk about it any more. Homer and the other boy leaned against the wall, glowering about them at the furniture, the radio and Weldon. Wooden matchsticks dangled from their lips like gangster cigarettes and their movements were queerly alike; they moved a hand from pocket to matchstick rapidly as it left the pocket then slowed it as it reached the matchstick, slowing it insolently, provocatively, until the fingers took the matchstick delicately and probed the teeth with it. No one spoke. The Purina man talked enthusiastically into the room, his voice rolling jovially, full of promise, over the silent Fishers, the strange boy and the fat-faced, thick-lipped girls, sitting stiffly with their hands holding glittering patent leather purses in their laps.

Then, from nerves or from habit, since it was something she did frequently every day, a symptom, perhaps, of that condition which drove her to such huge, clotted draughts of mineral oil, Mrs. Fisher belched, a rasping, mannish noise which ripped the air like a power saw slicing a plank, and instantly, following immediately in the sound, Weldon, screwed to such high tension as he had never known before and gaseous from the starchy Fisher diet of 1932, broke wind. His face turned scarlet at once but he did not change his position; his expression settled more firmly into that of the badgered, innocent youth, held incommunicado and for no reason whatever in the city jail.

Homer's friend giggled, a wet snicker which seemed to come from his acne-pocked nose, and the girls tittered, but it was plain that all three were laughing kindly and indulgently at Mrs. Fisher's explosion, not Weldon's. They ignored

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his action, it was not something to laugh at in front of somebody else's mother, whereas the belch was nothing but a comical, ordinary thing, an idiosyncracy of age; possibly Mrs. Fisher had done it to be entertaining. They chided her gently with their giggles, relieved to find she was human instead of merely Homer's mother, and did not acknowledge Weldon's behavior although in a short time, as soon as they were released from the company and implied influence of another generation, they would speak of it as wonderfully comic while they felt it as a sexual joke, since it reminded them of many things. Thus even Weldon's mishap was not without value and significance. Its implications were deep and exciting; like Homer's pocketknife, it had an aphrodisiacal quality, although of doubtful necessity, since they already possessed whiskey rights and twenty-five cent motion pictures.

Mrs. Fisher was uncertain about the actions of Weldon and herself in relation to the strangers, but she didn't dwell on it. She felt the need for conversation rather than thought, the need to impress directly upon these visitors the warning that she was a being, Homer's mother, in fact, and so she turned to him.

"He'll whup you to death when he finds out," she said in a flat, matter of fact tone.

Homer looked startled; for an instant he imagined something had gone wrong, that his father had learned of the party and forced the complicity of Mrs. Fisher, Weldon and Raymond in setting a dreadful trap for him. He pictured Mr. Fisher lurking in the garage or the shed, big, solid and dangerous in his blue overalls, biding his time. But the vision and the fear passed quickly; he realized his mother's intent, that of self-assertion in the only way she knew: the threat, the hint of a catastrophe in which she would not be implicated and on which she would not bother to pass judgment (although in this case she was certain to be involved in any mischance, she would stand or fall with Homer whether she willed it or not, since she was now hopelessly committed) and he understood it, because he used the device himself.

"Oh, yeah?" he said, curling his lips around the match-

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stick. "He ain't never gone touch *me* no more," and he glared at his friends, as though it were they who threatened him. He narrowed his eyes and twisted his lips painfully farther, he hunched his shoulders up and forward in a gesture of aggressive defense; he tried very hard to look as he felt a young man with a four-inch blade in his pocket should look.

"*That* old fool," he said.

"You hush your mouth now," said Mrs. Fisher, but she had lost interest; her eyes turned from Homer back to the wall. Her old feeling of numbness, of dumb, undirected patience was settling back on her, there seemed no reason to impress these people with her existence after all; she had established her familiar relationship with Homer and that was enough. Her excitement about the party ebbed away quickly, since the level it had reached on the flat beach of her consciousness had been only relatively high; she sank back into stagnancy and the room was silent against the jangling cries of the hillbilly band which had replaced the Purina man at his insistence.

"Hev yuh evah bin bahlooHOO," the radio mournfully sang, "Hev yuh evah bin loHONEly, heb yuh evah bin bahloo..."

"Say!" said Homer's male friend, and in a falsetto, sad and thin, he whined, "Aw haw!" and snapped his fingers in admiration, nodding at the radio. Homer glared at him.

"I'n play that," he said. "Come on," and he walked out of the room into the hall, followed by the other boy and, without having spoken a word, the two girls. They went down the hall and entered the bedroom Homer shared with his brothers. The door closed behind them and in a moment Mrs. Fisher and Weldon heard the twang of Homer's guitar and the angry whine of his voice.

"Hev yuh evah bin loHONEly, hev yuh evah bin bahlooHOO," he sang, sounding almost exactly like the man on the radio, striving, it seemed, for the coyote's piercing wail of longing and lone, barren desire.

Mrs. Fisher and Weldon sat in the front room, unmoving, as stolid and controlled as a pair of Al Capones, their eyes

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calm, almost lifeless. Mrs. Fisher felt the situation had altered and probably in the wrong direction, if it had any good or bad characteristics at all, but she was uncertain about it. Drugged with inertia, she allowed the fact, "they in the bedroom," to appear before her without any sentiment attached to it whatever. Weldon's thoughts were more active. He wondered what they were doing in there. They listened to Homer's voice and the primitive guitar for several minutes, and then the sounds stopped.

"Every penny counts nowadays," the man on the radio said. "Increase the output of your hens with Purina egg mash. Don't delay, do it today, with the red and white checkered Purina."

The hillbilly band started again and a thin, cowpuncher voice sang of the Alamo and a Comanche maiden in the moonlight.

"He'll kill him," Mrs. Fisher said. "That's what he'll do, he'll just kill him."

"What?" Raymond stood in the doorway with a saucer of ice cream and cake in each hand. "What is it, Mama?"

Mrs. Fisher did not look at him.

"Where they got to now?" said Raymond, standing there with the saucers. "Here I done dished up the party stuff and they ain't here."

He sat down next to his mother and looked from her to Weldon. His brother, still holding his position of outraged dignity, turned his head toward him.

"They in the bedroom," he said.

"The bedroom?" Raymond sounded disgusted. "What for? They can't hear no radio in there," and he put the saucers down on the floor. "What you sittin' there so funny for?" he asked his brother. "What the matter with you, anyway."

"Hush up, now," said Mrs. Fisher, and she rose from the sofa and shuffled down the hall to the bedroom door, facing it, bent forward slightly.

"Homer!" she cried. "I know you in there!"

There was no sound from the bedroom.

"I'll get a stick!" Mrs. Fisher said, but she did not try to

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open the door. She waited a moment, then called. "The ice cream's meltin'."

"Lemme take 'em a saucer," Raymond said. He stood at her side, looking up at her with a happy smile, proud of the ice cream and cake, eager to make friends with Homer's guests.

"Git!" said Mrs. Fisher, and she slapped him.

Raymond stood there for a moment, eight years old, a BYPU member, unable to believe what had happened. Then the sting spread from his face over his body and he was suddenly unbearably ashamed of the day, the house and everybody in it, including himself.

"Wah!" he screamed, running down the hall toward the back porch. "I never done nothing!" and as he rushed for the screen door he met his father, coming in.

Mr. Fisher was not a good salesman; the light did not burn within him and this was a fatal darkness. His heaviness, his lowering offer of his wares was noticed even in the Mexican restaurants, or perhaps especially there, and on the day of Homer's party he had canvassed the Mexican section of town, exhibiting his cement-like pies indifferently, brooding about the Katy railroad until he could stand it no longer. He went home earlier than usual.

When he turned into the driveway and saw the Ford roadster parked there, the whorish, insolent little car in his yard, he knew instantly what had happened and at once began cursing and shouting threats. He jumped from the sedan before it stopped and was on the backporch, thrusting Raymond aside, before the car ran up against the garage and halted with a sound of splintering wood.

"Where is he!" roared Mr. Fisher, rushing up the hall to his wife, undoing his belt as he went. "Where is that drunkard, that whoremonger!"

Mrs. Fisher stood in front of the bedroom door, still holding her slight stooping position. She looked calmly and absolutely unbelievingly at her husband and might have remained there indefinitely if Homer had not jerked the door open and jumped into the hall, wearing nothing but his underwear shorts.

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During the blink of an eyelid the trio stood bunched up in front of the open door, then Mr. Fisher's arm rose with the belt and Homer leaped back into the room, slamming the door behind him. Mr. Fisher immediately launched himself against it.

"Now you listen!" Homer cried from the other side. "These here is high class people, Daddy!"

"Ah!" grunted Mr. Fisher, crashing rhythmically against the door. "Ah! Ah!"

Mrs. Fisher turned and shuffled unhurriedly back to the front room. She pushed Weldon aside as she entered and reseated herself on the sofa. Weldon went back to his chair by the radio and they sat as they had before, but breathing heavily this time.

From the hallway came the steady thudding sounds of Mr. Fisher's body against the door and Homer's muffled shouts from the bedroom, mingled with other, foreign cries, treble wails made by the girls as they dressed themselves and crawled out a window, followed by Homer's boy friend. Mrs. Fisher and Weldon heard the Ford start, backfire, and roar in reverse down the driveway and into the street, but they did not get up to look outside. That part of the day, of life, was finished; it held no interest for them any longer. At the same time the activity at the bedroom door was hardly mysterious; they were not titillated by that, either. They sat on in the front room in vegetable, breathing stillness, waiting.

After his father crashed past him Raymond continued his flight from the house, screaming with outrage and shame. He ran into the shed and clambered wildly about over barrels and boxes, then settled down in a corner behind the broken remains of a rabbit hutch, relic of one of Mr. Fisher's earlier, less frantic attempts at self-sufficiency.

"I never done a single thing!" he said to the boxes and barrels, and tears streamed down his cheeks as he thought of the slap, the entrance of his father and the abrupt disintegration of Homer's party or what had been intended as Homer's party since for Raymond it had never begun. The sponge white cake in its neat cardboard package, and the green icy

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cream! All lost now, scattered and smashed like all dreams of good things.

"I'm on show him some day," muttered Raymond, clenching his fists. "He ain't even a Christian Daddy at all," and he imagined the triumph of love and God, the gentle, childish triumvirate of Father, Son and Holy Ghost ruling in this house, washing all sins away.

If only I done turned the other cheek, he thought, if only I remembered to do that. Next time I will, and he felt better, a soft, forgiving smile parted his wet lips and he squatted farther down behind the rabbit hutch, waiting for Homer's punishment to begin and then end, while in the house Mr. Fisher, in the agony of 1932, crashed rhythmically against the bedroom door.

●

THE BAD DREAM AND THE PHOTOGRAPH

Even in sleep your shadow watches, me
Your whisper rustles through the sleeping room
As though you moved in silks. Why keep on trying?
Nothing can turn you full-face to the noon.

I fool myself with pains you cannot feel,
You are contorted on another wheel.

It is some illness haunts you. Thin as water
Your cry draws out my pain and breath in one—
The whole thing flickers to a halt. You fade
And I perhaps might gape to find you gone.

But only stir and know you will not sleep
Gazing obliquely through the chilly dawn.
For what? The uneasy trance will never break,
Your smiling never save you from the dark,
Nor I for knowing you be less alone.

—A. ALVAREZ

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ADAM'S SONG TO HEAVEN

"You will be as God, knowing good and evil"

O depth sufficient to desire,
Ghostly abyss wherein perfection hides,
Purest effect and cause, you are
The mirror and the image love provides.

All else is waste, though you reveal
Lightly upon your luminous bent shore
Color, shape, odor, weight, and voice,
Bright mocking hints that were not there before,

And all your progeny time holds
In timeless birth and death. But, when, for bliss,
Loneliness would possess its like,
Mine is the visage yours leans down to kiss.

Beautiful you are, fair deceit!
Knowledge is joy where your unseeing eyes
Shine with the tears that I have wept
To be the sum of all your thoughts devise.

Flawless you are, unlimited
By other than yourself, yet suffer pain
Of the nostalgias I have felt
For love beyond the end your eyes contain;

Then, solitary, drift, inert,
Through the abyss where you would have me go,
And, lost to your desire, at last
Ravish the waste for what you cannot know.

What are you then! Delirium
Receives the image I despair to keep,
And knowledge in your sombre depth
Embraces your perfection and your sleep.

—EDGAR BOWERS

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IN THE ENVIRONS OF THE FUNERAL HOME

In the environs of the funeral home
The smell of death was absent. All I knew
Were flowers rioting and odors blown
Tangible as a blossom into the face,
To be inhaled and hushed—and where they grew
Smothered the nostrils in the pungent grass.

Hyacinths of innocence and yellow-hammers
That beat the air at dawn, at dusk, to metal
Immortality, that flush where a bee clamors
For wine, are blooms of another color. See
How the flush fades as it descends the petal,
How deep the insect drinks, how quietly.

The point of this is a bitter paradox:
That violets flying a silver and gold elation,
And flapping ruffles of the white lilacs,
Shaking the air to tempt the golden bee,
Stiffen at the moment of consummation,
Swayed with guilt and weight of the bee's body.

These flowers, when cut and used, will remain ruddy,
As though made deathless in the very way
Their cutter kept the hue in the human body
That they were cut to celebrate and mourn.
The coffin has sprouted in dark mahogany
Out of them—edged, and shining like a thorn.

—ROBERT MEZEY

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THE TENNESSEE MARRIAGE

Underneath the damask rose
The marriage lace is torn.
Lift up loblolly days to disclose
The paralytic hours, sworn
To lumber, while the fat bear raids
Beneath the moon and blowzers the brocades
Within the Baptist Female College.
The Robertson County Almanac,
Calculated for Tennessee:
"The state of humble Wedded-Lock
Is better than proud Virginity."
What of Beau Nash, naked on a cow,
Who shows the timid gentlemen how
To assuage the longing for intrigue?
The New Yorkers talk of lower-men
And how love-nights are fine and mellow,
Makes you do what you know is sin
With husbands dressed in vested-yellow.
Yet here we are, waiting death,
Gathering up our sensual breath
To sing and dance with Methodist pie.
The true rust of the Barons' wars
Is sinecure. The bare name
Of being a father spares no man,
And sparing none, reveals a gift
For commonness. Is not the wild
And undisciplined affair
A way to make oneself great?
The real charm of the marriage stare
Is deviousness, and lost desire
Redeemed within adulterous fire:
Surely love should never cease.

—WILL MORGAN

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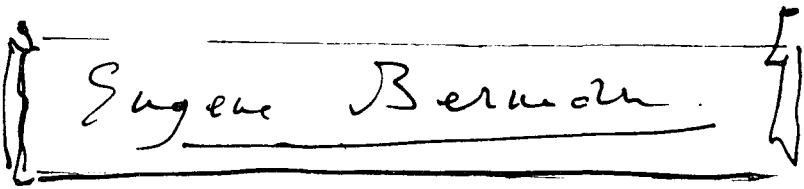

EUGENE BERMAN, like many another individualist painter of this century (consider the case of Pierre Roy, whose *trompe l'œil* ribbon-and-rusty-nail became, to the artist's chagrin, a rallying-point) has at various times been appropriated by the Surrealists, and at other times been lumped with them by the casual gallery-goer. If Berman's paintings project a sense of suspended time, of mystery of place, and mystery of human personality—as his scenes of Venice or Mexico, for instance—it is expression of his intensely personal vision of the world, of a Slavic temperament (born St. Petersburg, 1899) constantly rediscovering the worlds of Italy. He began at the age of eight to draw and paint, to study architecture, to love the theatre, moving to Paris when he was seventeen.

Berman's paintings have in recent years tended to be overshadowed by his dazzling designs for the theatre (he may be said to have restored architecture to its rightful place in the grammar of theatrical decoration) so sometime this year, after a last grandiose assignment for the Metropolitan Opera, he will settle in Rome to work at his easel. His farewell to the theatre—if it prove to be so—caps twenty years of works such as the Paris production of *The Threepenny Opera*, ballets such as *Devil's Holiday*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the unforgettable now-vanished Stravinsky *Danses Concertantes* where dancers like jeweled beetles performed one of Balanchine's most enchanting choreographies against a black-and-*grisaille* drop. Each of these productions was preceded by literally hundreds of sketches and plans: a multitude of notebooks showing what industry, what versatility and devotion went toward making the brief glittering theatrical moment. His notebooks are now directed toward paintings; the recent pages reproduced here are taken from a series called *Imaginary Promenades in Italy*.

—E.W.

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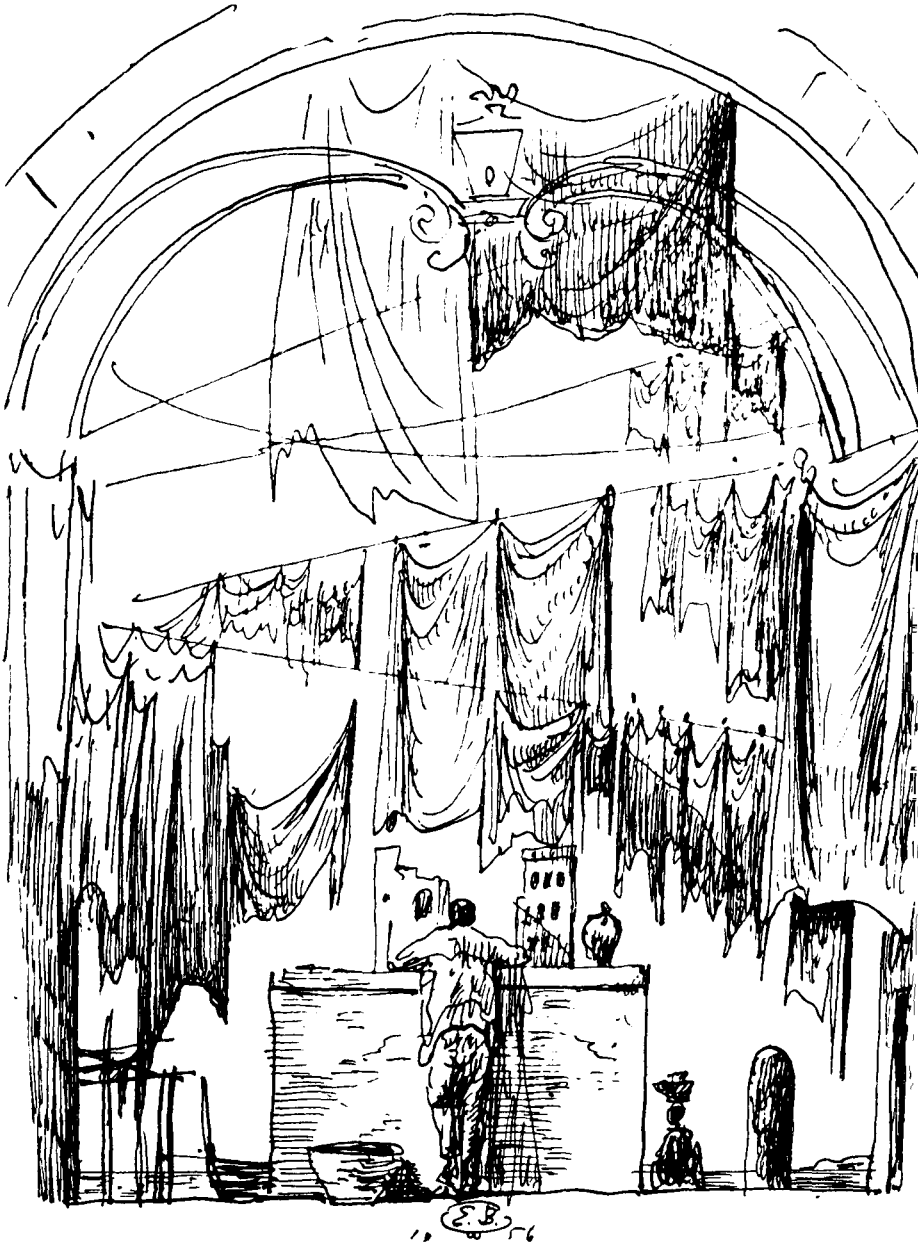

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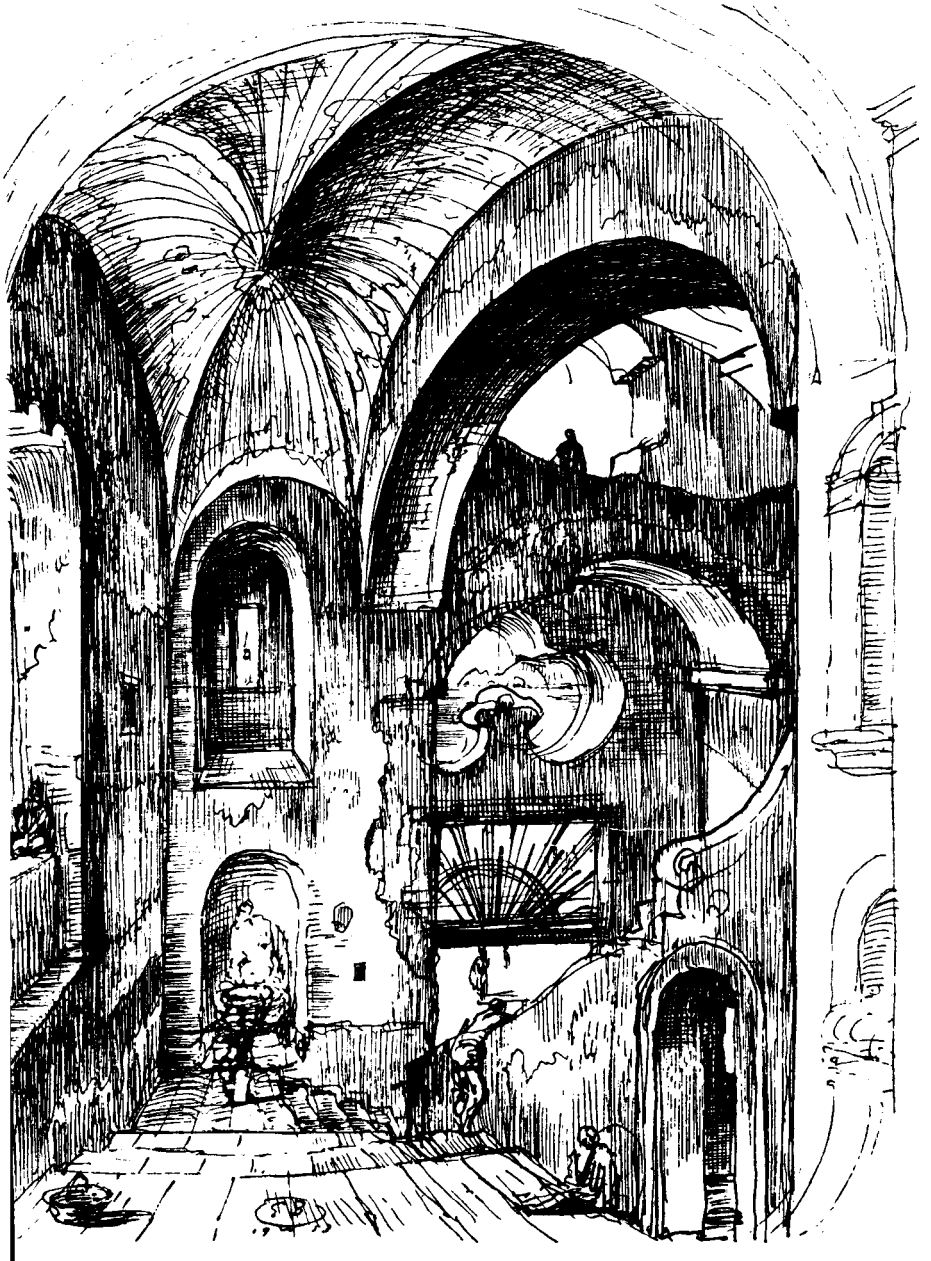

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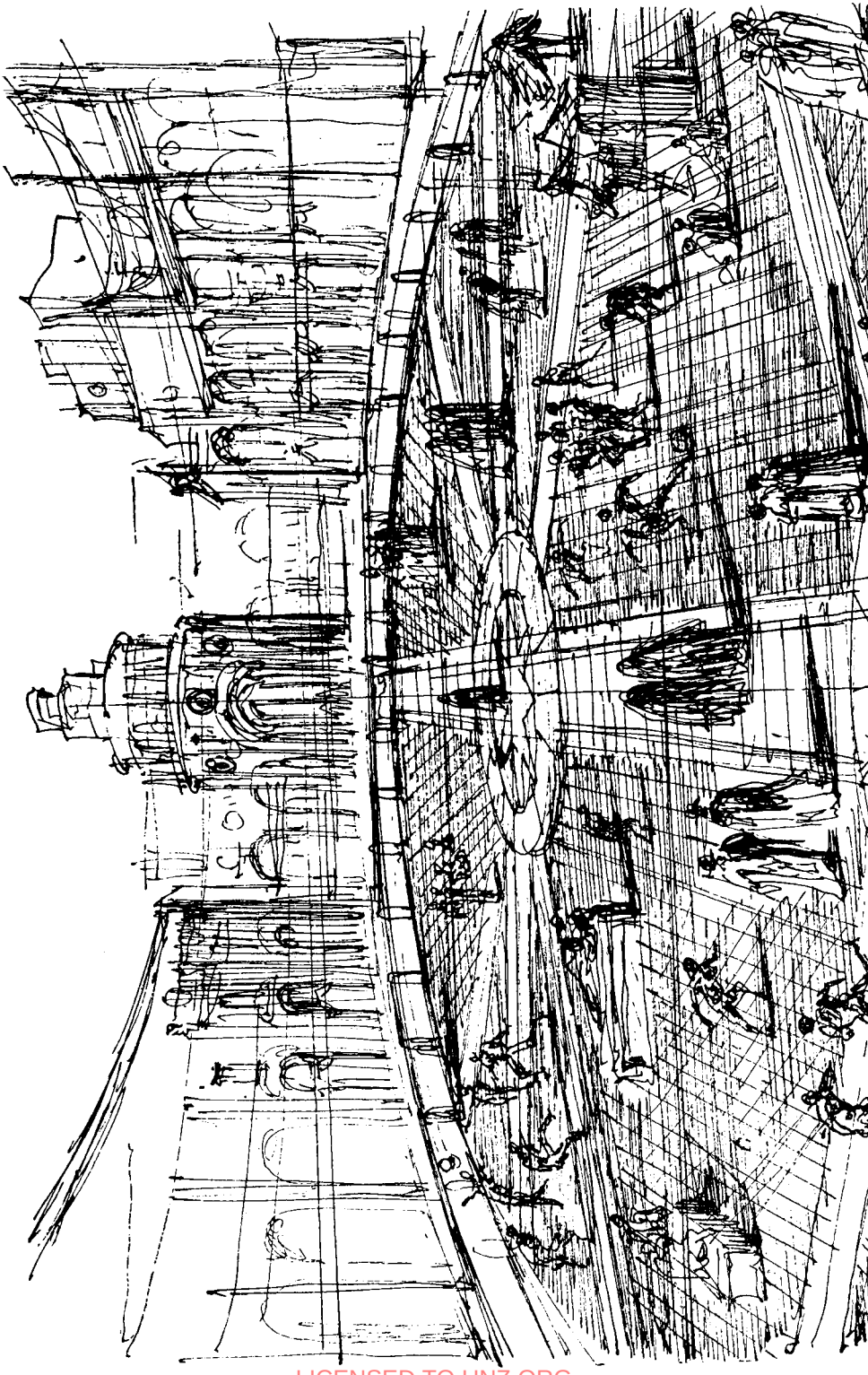

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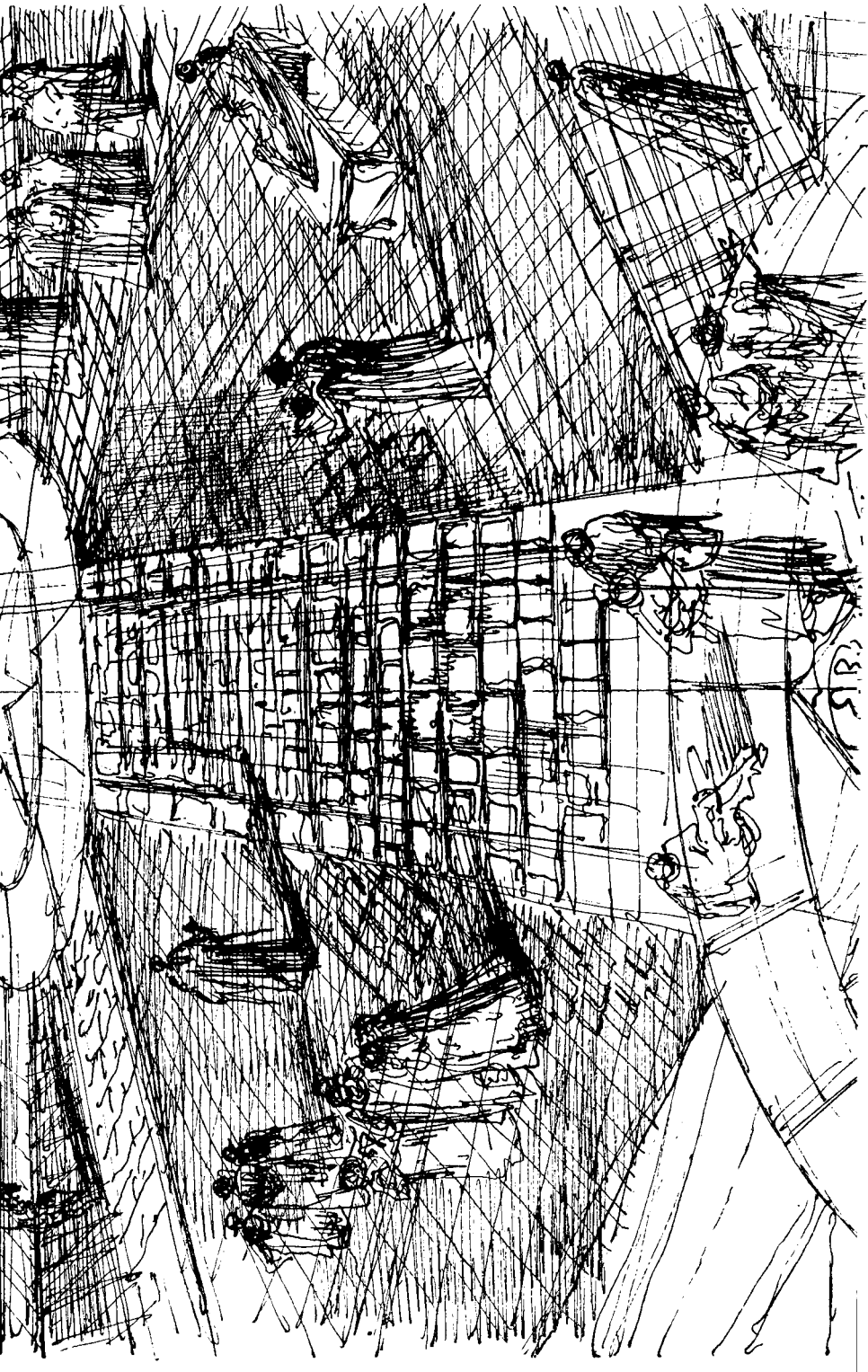

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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

No, nothing is asleep in this demesne
Of scrub pine, washed-out oak; the wet
Intrudes on every cache,
And feathered throats complain
That the rude wind is tramping through the brush
In streams of sweat.

There are deep holes beneath the sodden thatch
And under rocks and rotten logs,
Where you may press your eyes
Like fingers on a latch
Opening caverns pungent with surprise:
Three watchful dogs

With eyes as big as candles or chime-clocks
Sit on a heaped-up treasury
And will not wink or doze.
But where's the tinder box
To fetch the sleeping princess in her nightclothes
For privacy,

Or kindle the vault where Juliet lies asleep
Dreaming of sunlight on a sheet?
Under the spongy turf
Not closeted or deep
A girl lies dead: and the dying needles beat
On her face like surf.

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II

Turn over again. The reins of day are reversed,
And sleep the overrider spurs
His foaming mount to death.
Intolerable thirst
Evokes the dripping forest whose moist breath
Dunned in your ears.

The wind said: "It is because the thrushes sing
How beauty innocent of pain
Transfigures all this brake,
That I am ravaging.
Woe to the antic sparrow when I shake
My jagged mane."

Pain is certain. "There may be heaven, there must
Be hell." The sleeping virgin dreams
Enchanted harmonies
Within her house of dust;
But now the grinding tempest racks the trees,
Big vacant seams

Divulge the treasures of the fissured earth:
A grave springs open and at last,
Brushing the dirt aside
With hideous pangs of birth,
The sleeping beauty wakes, immortal bride,
And holds you fast.

—ROBERT LAYZER

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Bk Two chapter 1. begins on page 44 ends pg. 47 (36)

Book TWO : chapter Two

~~BOOK TWO~~ : ~~PAMPHILUS~~

Under the burden of perplexity and self-reproach Pamphilus decided to seek some light on his problem by reviving an old custom. This custom ~~had been~~ in frequent use among Greeks of the great age, but had fallen off at the time of the events of this story. Athletes still observed it several days before a race; brides observed it on the eve of their wedding; and devout soldiers about to set out upon an expedition; old ladies who hoped to recover some lost trinket. It consisted of abstaining from speech and from food from one sunrise to the next and of either passing the night in the temple enclosure or arriving there before the dawn that closed the watch. There was not thought to be any particular magic in the practice; ~~and the Greek world was not opposed to~~ ~~increasing the experience by any further self-denial~~: it cleared the mind of ~~its~~ fumes, removed it from the commerce of the day, and prepared it perhaps for a significant dream. The Watcher guarded his fast and his silence, but the Greek world did not approve of heightening the experience by any further self-denial. The watcher moved about the home as usual; he exercised in the palaestra; if some uninformed person spoke to him, he drew his finger across his lips and the situation was understood. ~~The Greek world was not opposed to the practice of fasting and silence. Pamphilus was therefore not forbidden~~ Since fasting was not forbidden to young Glycerium, nor had he consented to ~~the division~~ seemed to be left to the young man, Pamphilus under the burden of perplexity and remorse decided to observe this discipline ~~on his own to seek for this problem~~. It was indeed little short of ~~startling~~ odd for a full grown man in the even current of private life to revive this custom, but the Islanders were still sufficiently religious to respect the habits that has expressed the spiritual life of their glorious grandfathers, and now made no comment.

A manuscript page from Thornton Wilder's The Woman of Andros. *The final text appears on page 131 of the original edition published by Albert & Charles Boni, N.Y., 1930. Reprinted by permission of the Yale University Library.*

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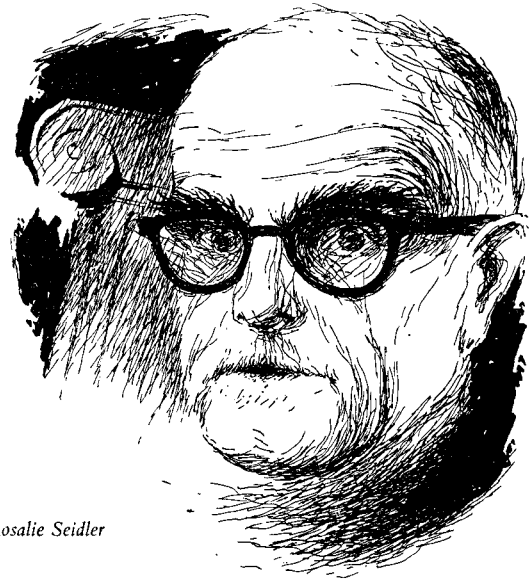

Sketch by Rosalie Seidler

THE ART OF FICTION XVI

THORNTON WILDER

A national newsmagazine not very long ago in its weekly cover story limned Thornton Wilder as an amiable, eccentric itinerant schoolmaster who wrote occasional novels and plays which won prizes and enjoyed enormous but somewhat unaccountable success.

Wilder himself has said: "I'm almost sixty and look it. I'm the kind of man whom timid old ladies stop on the street to ask about the nearest subway station: newsvendors in university towns call me 'professor', and hotel clerks, 'doctor'."

Many of those who have viewed him in the classroom, on the speaker's rostrum, on shipboard, or at gatherings have been reminded of Theodore Roosevelt who was at the top of his form when Wilder was an adolescent and whom Wilder

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resembles in his driving energy, his enthusiasms, and his unbounded gregariousness.

It is unlikely that more than a few of his countless friends have seen Wilder in repose. Only then do you realize that he wears a mask. The mask is no figure of speech. It is his eyeglasses.

As do most glasses, they partially conceal his eyes. The glasses also distort his eyes so that they appear larger: friendly, benevolent, alive with curiosity and interest. Deliberately or not, he rarely removes his glasses in the presence of others. When he does remove them, unmasks himself so to speak, the sight of his eyes is a shock.

Unobscured, the eyes—cold light blue—reveal an intense severity and an almost forbidding intelligence. They do not call out a cheerful "Kinder! Kinder!..."; rather, they specify: "I am listening to what you are saying. Be serious. Be precise."

Seeing Wilder unmasked is a sobering and tonic experience. For his eyes dissipate the atmosphere of indiscriminate amiability and humbug that collects around celebrated and gifted men; the eyes remind that you confronted by one of the toughest and most complicated minds in contemporary America. They are the eyes of a man whose novels have enjoyed the attention and aroused the sensibilities, for thirty years now, of the whole gamut of the reading public in America and Europe. (In Germany he is generally addressed as *Verehrter Dichter*.) His plays have so appreciably affected American theater tradition that few serious dramatists have ignored the fact of their existence.

Why the mask? Ultimately, that must remain Thornton Wilder's secret, as it remains the secret of every artist. A part of the explanation, however, may lie in the fact, as this interview will suggest, that not the least of his virtues is his admirable tact, his consideration for the feelings of others.

★

(Scene: An apartment overlooking the Hudson River in New York City. During the conversations, which took place on the evening of December fourteenth and on the following afternoon, Mr. Wilder

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could watch the river lights or the river barges as he contemplated his replies.)

INTERVIEWER

Sir, do you mind if we begin with a few irrelevant—and possibly impertinent—questions, just for a warm-up?

WILDER

Perfectly all right. Ask whatever comes into your head...

INTERVIEWER

One of our really eminent critics, in writing about you recently, suggested that among the critics you had made no enemies. Is that a healthy situation for a serious writer?

WILDER

(After laughing somewhat ironically) The important thing is that you make sure that neither the favorable nor the unfavorable critics move into your head and take part in the composition of your next work.

INTERVIEWER

One of your most celebrated colleagues said recently that about all a writer really needs is a place to work, tobacco, some food and good whiskey. Could you explain to the nondrinkers among us how liquor helps things along?

WILDER

Many writers have told me that they have built up mnemonic devices to start them off on each day's writing task. Hemingway once told me he sharpened twenty pencils; Willa Cather that she read a passage from the Bible (not from piety, she was quick to add, but to get in touch with fine prose; she also regretted that she had formed this habit, for the prose-rhythms of 1611 were not those she was in search of). My spring-board has always been long walks. I drink a great deal, but I do not associate it with writing.

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INTERVIEWER

Although military service is a proud tradition among contemporary American writers, I wonder if you would care to comment on the circumstance that you volunteered in 1942, despite the fact that you were a veteran of the first world war. That is to say, do you believe that a seasoned and mature artist is justified in abandoning what he is particularly fitted to do for patriotic motives?

WILDER

I guess everyone speaks for himself in such things. I felt very strongly about it. I was already a rather old man, was fit only for staffwork, but I certainly did it with conviction. I have always felt that both enlistments were valuable for a number of reasons.

One of the dangers of the American artist is that he finds himself almost exclusively thrown in with persons more or less in the arts. He lives among them; eats among them; quarrels with them; marries them. I have long felt that portraits of the non-artist in American literature reflect a pattern, because the artists don't really frequent. He portrays the man in the street as he remembers him from childhood, or he copies him out of other books. So one of the benefits of military service, *one* of them, is being thrown into daily contact with non-artists, a thing young American writers should consciously seek—his acquaintance should include also those who have read only *Treasure Island* and have forgotten that. Since 1800 many central figures in narratives have been, like their authors, artists or quasi-artists. Can you name three heroes in earlier literature who partook of the artistic temperament?

INTERVIEWER

Did the young Thornton Wilder resemble George Brush and in what ways?

WILDER

Very much so. I came from a very strict Calvinistic father,

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was brought up partly among the missionaries of China, and went to that splendid college at Oberlin at a time when the classrooms and student life carried a good deal of that pious didacticism which would now be called narrow Protestantism. And that book *(Heaven's My Destination)* is, at is were, an effort to come to terms with those influences.

The comic spirit is given to us in order that we may analyze, weigh, and clarify things in us which nettle us, or which we are outgrowing, or trying to reshape. That is a very autobiographical book.

INTERVIEWER

Why have you generally avoided contemporary settings in your work?

WILDER

I think you would find that the work is a gradual drawing near to the America I know. I began with the purely fantastic twentieth century Rome (I did not frequent such circles there); then, Peru; then, Hellenistic Greece. I began, first with *Heaven's My Destination*, to approach the American scene. Already, in the one act plays, I had become aware of how difficult it is to invest one's contemporary world with the same kind of imaginative life one has extended to those removed in time and place. But I always feel that the progression is there and visible; I can be seen collecting the practice, the experience, and courage to present my own times.

INTERVIEWER

What is your feeling about "authenticity"? For example, you had never been in Peru when you wrote *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

WILDER

The chief answer to that is that the journey of the imagination to a remote place is child's play compared to a journey into another time. I've been often in New York, but it's just

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as preposterous to write about the New York of 1812 as to write about the Incas.

INTERVIEWER

You have often been cited as a "stylist". As a writer who is obviously concerned with tone and exactness of expression, do you find that the writing of fiction is a painful and exhausting process, or do you write easily, quickly and joyously?

WILDER

Once you catch the idea for an extended narration—drama or novel—and if that idea is firmly within you, then the writing brings you perhaps not so much pleasure as a deep absorption... (Mr. Wilder reflected here for a moment and then continued). You see, my waste-paper basket is filled with works that went a quarter-through and which turned out to be one of those things which failed to engross the whole of me... And then for a while, there's a very agonizing period of time in which I try to explore whether that work I've rejected cannot be re-oriented in such a way as to absorb me. The decision to abandon it is hard.

INTERVIEWER

Do you do much rewriting?

WILDER

I forget which of the great sonneteers said: "One line in the fourteen comes from the ceiling; the others have to be adjusted around it." Well, likewise there are passages in every novel whose first writing is pretty much the last. But it's the joint and cement, between those spontaneous passages, that take a great deal of re-writing.

INTERVIEWER

I don't know exactly how to put the next question, because I realize you have a lot of theories about narration, about how a thing should be told—theories all related to the decline of the novel, and so on. But I wonder if you would say

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something about the problem of giving a "history" or a summary of your life in relation to your development as a writer.

WILDER

Let's try. The problem of telling you about my past life as a writer is like that of imaginative narration itself, it lies in the effort to employ the past tense in such a way that it does not rob those events of their character of having transpired in freedom. A great deal of writing and talking about the past is unacceptable. It freezes the historical in a determinism. Today's writer smugly passes his last judgment and confers on existing attitudes the lifeless aspect of plaster-cast statues in a museum. They recount the past as though the characters knew what was going to happen next.

INTERVIEWER

Well, to begin—do you feel that you were born in a place and at a time, and to a family—all of which combined favorably to shape you for what you were to do?

WILDER

Comparisons of one's lot with others teaches us nothing and enfeebles the will. Many born in an environment of poverty, disease and stupidity, in an age of chaos, have put us in their debt. By the standards of many people, and by my own, these dispositions were favorable;—but what are our judgments in such matters? Everyone is born with an array of handicaps—even Mozart, even Sophocles—and acquires new ones. In a famous passage, Shakespeare ruefully complains that he was not endowed with another writer's "scope"! We are all equally distant from the sun, but we all have a share in it. The most valuable thing I inherited was a temperament that does not revolt against Necessity and that is constantly renewed in Hope. (I am alluding to Goethe's great poem about the problem of each man's "lot"—the *Orphische Worte*.)

INTERVIEWER

Did you have a happy childhood?

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WILDER

I think I did, but I also think that that's a thing about which people tend to deceive themselves. Gertrude Stein once said "Communists are people who fancied that they had an unhappy childhood." (I think she meant that the kind of person who can persuade himself that the world would be completely happy if everyone denied himself a vast number of free decisions, is the same kind of person who could persuade himself that in early life he had been thwarted and denied all free decision.) I think of myself as having been—right up to and through my college years—a sort of sleepwalker. I was not a dreamer, but a muser and a self-amuser. I have never been without a whole repertory of absorbing hobbies, curiosities, inquiries, interests. Hence, my head has always seemed to me to be like a brightly lighted room, full of the most delightful objects, or perhaps I should say, filled with tables on which are set up the most engrossing games. I have never been a collector, but the resource that I am describing must be much like that of a collector busying himself with his coins or minerals. Yet, collectors are apt to be "avid" and competitive, while I have no ambition and no competitive sense. Gertrude also said, with her wonderful yes-saying laugh: "Oh, I wish I were a miser; being a miser must be so occupying." I have never been unoccupied. That's as near as I can get to a statement about the happiness or unhappiness of my childhood. Yet: I am convinced that except in a few extraordinary cases, one form or another of an unhappy childhood is essential to the formation of exceptional gifts. Perhaps I should have been a better man if I had had an unequivocally unhappy childhood.

INTERVIEWER

Can you see—or analyze, perhaps—tendencies in your early years which led you into writing?

WILDER

I thought we were supposed to talk about the art of the novel. Is it all right to go on talking about myself this way?

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INTERVIEWER

I feel that it's all to the point.

WILDER

We often hear the phrase, "a winning child". Winning children (who appear so guileless) are children who have discovered how effective charm and modesty and a delicately calculated spontaneity are in winning what they want. All children, emerging from the egocentric monsterhood of infancy ("Gimme! Gimme!" cries the Nero in the bassinet), are out to win their way—from their parents, playmates, from "life", from all that is bewildering and inexplicable in themselves. They are also out to win some expression of themselves as individuals. Some are early marked to attempt it by assertion, by slam-bang methods; others by a watchful docility; others by guile. The future author is one who discovers that language, the exploration and manipulation of the resources of language, will serve him in winning through to his way. This does not necessarily mean that he is highly articulate in persuading or cajoling or outsmarting his parents and companions, for this type of child is not usually of the "community" type—he is at one remove from the persons around him. (The future scientist is at eight removes.) Language for him is the instrument for digesting experience, for explaining himself to himself. Many great writers have been extraordinarily awkward in daily exchange, but the greatest give the impression that their style was nursed by the closest attention to colloquial speech. Let me digress for a moment: probably you won't want to use it. For a long time I tried to explain to myself the spell of Madame de Sévigné; she is not devastatingly witty nor wise. She is simply at one with French syntax. Phrase, sentence and paragraph breathe this effortless at-homeness with how one sees, feels, and says a thing in the French language. What attentive ears little Marie de Rabutin-Chantal must have had! Greater writers than she had such an adjustment to colloquial speech—Montaigne, La Fontaine, Voltaire—but they had things to say: didactic matter; she had merely to exhibit the genius in the language.

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I have learned to watch the relation to language on the part of young ones,—those community-directed toward persuasion, edification, instruction; and those engaged ("merely" engaged) in fixing some image of experience; and those others for whom language is nothing more than a practical convenience ("Oh, Mr. Wilder, tell me how I can get a wider vocabulary?").

INTERVIEWER

Well now, inasmuch as you have gone from story-telling to playwrighting, would you say the same tendencies which produced the novelist, produced the dramatist?

WILDER

I think so, but in stating them I find myself involved in a paradox. A dramatist is one who believes that the pure event, an action involving human beings, is more arresting than any comment that can be made upon it. On the stage it is always *now;* the personages are standing on that razor-edge, between the past and the future, which is the essential character of conscious being; the words are arising to their lips in immediate spontaneity. A novel is what *took place;* no self-effacement on the part of the narrator can hide the fact that we hear his voice recounting, recalling events that are past and over, and which he has selected—from uncountable others—to lay before us from his presiding intelligence. Even the most objective novels are cradled in the authors' emotions and the authors' assumptions about life and mind and the passions. Now the paradox lies not so much in the fact that you and I know that the dramatist equally has selected what he exhibits and what the characters will say —such an operation is inherent in any work of art—but that all the greatest dramatists, except the very greatest *one*, have precisely employed the stage to convey a moral or religious point of view concerning the action. The theater is supremely fitted to say: "Behold! These things are..." Yet most dramatists employ it to say: "This moral truth can be learned from beholding this action."

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The Greek tragic poets wrote for edification, admonition, and even for our political education. The comic tradition in the theater carries the intention of exposing folly and curbing excess. Only in Shakespeare are we free of hearing axes ground.

INTERVIEWER

How do you get around this difficulty?

WILDER

By what may be an impertinence on my part. By believing that the moralizing intention resided in the authors as a convention of their times—usually, a social convention so deeply buried in the author's mode of thinking that it seemed to him to be inseparable from creation. I reverse a popular judgment: we say that Shaw wrote diverting plays to sugar-coat the pill of a social message. Of these other dramatists, I say they injected a didactic intention in order to justify to themselves and to their audiences the exhibition of pure experience.

INTERVIEWER

Is your implication then that drama should be art for art's sake?

WILDER

Experience for experience's sake—rather than for moral improvement's sake. When we say that Vermeer's "Girl Making Lace" is a work of art for art's sake, we are not saying anything contemptuous about it. I regard the theater as the greatest of all art-forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being. This supremacy of the theater derives from the fact that it is always "now" on the stage. It is enough that generations have been riveted by the sight of Clytemnestra luring Agamemnon to the fatal bath, and Oedipus searching out the truth which will ruin him; those circumambient tags about "don't get prideful" and "don't call anybody happy until he's dead" are incidental concomitants.

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INTERVIEWER

Is it your contention that there is no place in the theater for didactic intentions?

WILDER

The theater is so vast and fascinating a realm that there is room in it for preachers and moralists and pamphleteers. As to the highest function of the theater I rest my case with Shakespeare—*Twelfth Night* as well as *Macbeth*.

INTERVIEWER

If you will forgive me, I'm afraid I've lost track of something we were talking about a while back—we were talking about the tendencies in your childhood which went into the formation of a dramatist.

WILDER

The point that I've been leading up to is that a dramatist is one who from his earliest years has found that sheer gazing at the shocks and countershocks among people is quite sufficiently engrossing without having to encase it in comment. It's a form of tact. It's a lack of presumption. That's why so many earnest people have been so exasperated by Shakespeare: they cannot isolate the passages wherein we hear him speaking in his own voice. Somewhere Shaw says that one page of Bunyan "who plants his standard on the forefront of... I-forget-what... is worth a hundred by such shifting opalescent men."

INTERVIEWER

Are we to infer from what you say that the drama ought to have no social function?

WILDER

Oh yes,—there are at least two. First, the presentation of *what is*, under the direction of those great hands, is important enough. We live in *what is*, but we find a thousand ways not to face it. Great theater strengthens our faculty to face it.

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Secondly, to be present at any work of man-made order, and harmony, and intellectual power—Vermeer's "Lace-Maker" or a Haydn quartet or *Twelfth Night*—is to be confirmed and strengthened in our potentialities as man.

INTERVIEWER

I wonder if you don't hammer your point pretty hard because actually you have a considerable element of the didactic in you.

WILDER

Yes, of course. I've spent a large part of my life trying to sit on it, to keep it down. The pages and pages I've had to tear up. I think the struggle with it may have brought a certain kind of objectivity into my work. I've become accustomed to readers taking widely different views of the intentions in my books and plays. A good example is George Brush, whom we were talking about before. George, the hero of a novel of mine which I wrote when I was nearly forty, is an earnest, humorless, moralizing, preachifying, interfering product of the "Bible belt" evangelism. I received many letters from writers of the George Brush mentality angrily denouncing me for making fun of sacred things, and a letter from the Mother Superior of a convent in Ohio saying that she regarded the book as an allegory of the stages in the spiritual life.

Many thank me for the "comfort" they found in the last act of *Our Town;* others tell me that it is a desolating picture of our limitation to "realize" life—almost too sad to endure.

Many assured me that *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* was a satisfying demonstration that all the accidents of life were overseen and harmonized in providence; and a society of atheists in New York wrote me that it was the most artful exposure of shallow optimisms since *Candide* and asked me to address them.

A very intelligent woman to whom I offered the dedication of *The Skin of Our Teeth* refused it, saying that the play was so defeatist. ("Man goes stumbling, bumbling down the ages.")

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The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden received its first performance, an admirable one, at The University of Chicago. Edna St. Vincent Millay happened to be in the audience. At the close of the play she congratulated me at having so well pictured that "detestable bossy kind of mother."

Most writers firmly guide their readers to "what they should think" about the characters and events. If an author refrains from intruding his point of view, readers will be nettled, but will project into the text their own assumptions and turns of mind. If the work has vitality, it will, however slightly, alter those assumptions.

INTERVIEWER

So that you have *not* eliminated all didactic intentions from your work after all?

WILDER

I suspect that all writers have some didactic intention. That starts the motor. Or let us say: many of the things we eat are cooked over a gas stove, but there is no taste of gas in the food.

INTERVIEWER

Bravo!—In one of your Harvard lectures you spoke of—I don't remember the exact words—a prevailing hiatus between the highbrow and lowbrow reader. Do you think a work could appear at this time which would satisfy both the discriminating reader and the larger public?

WILDER

What we call a great age in literature is an age in which that is completely possible: that the whole total Athenian audience took part in the flowering of Greek tragedy and Greek comedy. And so in the age of the great Spaniards. So in the age of Elizabeth. We certainly are not, in any sense, in the flowering of a golden age now; and one of the unfortunate things about the situation is this great gulf. And it would be a very wonderful thing if we see more and more works which close that gulf between the highbrows and lowbrows.

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INTERVIEWER

Someone has said—one of your dramatist colleagues, I believe, I can't remember which one—that a writer only deals with one or two ideas throughout his work. Would you say your work reflects those one or two ideas?

WILDER

Yes, I think so. I only have become aware of it myself recently. Those ideas seem to have prompted my work before I realized it. Now, at my age, I am amused by the circumstance that what is now conscious with me, was for a long time latent. One of those ideas is this: an unresting preoccupation with the surprise of the gulf between each tiny occasion of the daily life and the vast stretches of time and place in which every individual plays his role.

By that I mean the absurdity of any single person's claim to the importance of his saying: "I love!"... "I suffer!", when one thinks of the background of the billions who have lived and died, who are living and dying, and presumably will live and die.

This was particularly developed in me by the almost accidental chance that having graduated from Yale in 1920, I was sent abroad to study archaeology at the American Academy in Rome. We even took field trips in those days and in a small way took part in diggings. When one has swung a pickaxe which will reveal the curve of a street four-thousand years covered over which was once an active, much traveled highway, you are never quite the same again. You look at Times Square as a place about which you imagine some day scholars saying: "There appears to have been some kind of public center here."

This preoccupation came out in my work before I realized it. Even *Our Town*, which I now see is filled with it, was not so consciously directed by me at the time. At first glance, the play appears to be practically a genre study of the picture of a village in New Hampshire. On second glance, it appears to be a meditation about the difficulty of, as the play says, "realizing life while you live it." But buried back in the text,

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from the very commencement of the play, is a constant repetition of the words: "hundreds", "thousands", "millions". It's as though the audience—no one has ever mentioned this to me, though—is looking at that town at ever greater distances through a telescope.

I'd like to cite some examples of this. Soon after the play begins the Stage Manager calls upon the professor from the geology department of the state university who says how many million years old the ground is they're on. And the Stage Manager talks about putting some objects and reading matter into the cornerstone of a new bank and covering it with a preservative so that it can be read a thousand years from now. Or as minister presiding at the wedding, the Stage Manager muses to himself about the marriages that have ever taken place—"millions of 'em, millions of 'em... Who set out to live two by two..." Finally among the seated dead, one of the dead says: "My son was a sailor and used to sit on the porch. And he says the light from that star took millions of years to arrive."

There is still more of this. So that when finally the heartbreak of Emily's unsuccessful return to life again occurs, it is against the background of the almost frightening range of these things.

Then *The Skin of Our Teeth*, which takes five thousand years to go by, is really a way of trying to make sense out of the *multiplicity* of the human race and its affections.

So that I see myself making an effort to find the dignity in the trivial of our daily life, against those preposterous stretches which seem to rob it of any such dignity; and the validity of each individual's emotion.

INTERVIEWER

I feel that there is another important theme running through your work which has to deal with the nature of love. For example, there are a number of aphorisms in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* which are often quoted and which related to that theme. Do your views on the nature of love change in you later works?

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WILDER

My ideas have not greatly changed; but those aphorisms in *The Bridge* represent only one side of them and are limited by their application to what is passing in that novel. In *The Ides of March*, my ideas are more illustrated than stated.

Love started out as a concomitant of reproduction; it is what makes new life and then shelters it. It is therefore an affirmation about existence and a belief in value. Tens of thousands of years have gone by; more complicated forms of society and of consciousness have arisen. Love acquired a wide variety of secondary expressions. It got mixed up with a power conflict between male and female; it got cut off from its primary intention and took its place among the refinements of psychic life and in the cult of pleasure; it expanded beyond the relations of the couple and the family and reappeared as philanthropy; it attached itself to man's ideas about the order of the universe and was attributed to the gods and God.

I always see beneath it, nevertheless, the urge that strives toward justifying life, harmonizing it,—the source of energy on which life must draw in order to better itself. In *The Ides of March* I illustrate its educative power (Caesar toward Cleopatra and his wife; the actress toward Marc Antonio) and its power to "crystallize" idealization in the lover (Catullus's infatuation for the destructive "drowning" Clodia—he divines in her the great qualities she once possessed). This attitude has so much the character of self-evidence for me that I am unable to weigh or even "hear" any objections to it. I don't know whether I am uttering an accepted platitude or a bit of naïve nonsense.

INTERVIEWER

Your absorbing interest in James Joyce and Gertrude Stein is pretty well known. I wonder if there are any other literary figures who are of particular interest to you.

WILDER

In present day life?

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INTERVIEWER

Well, past or present.

WILDER

I am always, as I said earlier, in the middle of a whole succession of very stormy admirations up and down literature. Every now and then, I lose one; very sad. Among contemporaries, I am deeply indebted to Ezra Pound and Mr. Eliot. In the past, I have these last few years worked a good deal with Lope de Vega, not in the sense of appraisal of his total work but almost as a curious and very absorbing game—the pure technical business of dating his enormous output of plays... I could go on forever about these successive enthusiasms.

INTERVIEWER

Do you believe that a serious young writer can write for television or the movies without endangering his gifts?

WILDER

Television and Hollywood are a part of show business. If that young writer is to be a dramatist, I believe that he's tackling one of the most difficult of all métiers—far harder than the novel. All excellence is equally difficult, but considered as sheer métier, I would always advise any young writer for the theater to do everything—to adapt plays, to translate plays, to hang around theaters, to paint scenery, to become an actor, if possible. Writing for TV or radio or the movies is all part of it. There's a bottomless pit in the acquisition of how to tell an imagined story to listeners and viewers.

INTERVIEWER

If that young writer has the problem of earning a livelihood, are teaching English, or advertising, or journalism suitable vocations?

WILDER

I think all are unfavorable to the writer. If by day you handle the English language either in the conventional forms

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which are journalism or advertising, or in the analysis which is teaching English in school or college, you will have a double, a quadruple difficulty in finding *your* English language at night and on Sundays. It is proverbial that every newspaper reporter has a half-finished novel in his bureau drawer. Reporting—which can be admirable in itself—is poles apart from shaping concepts into imagined actions and requires a totally different ordering of mind and language. When I had to earn my living for many years, I taught French. I should have taught mathematics. By teaching math or biology or physics, you come refreshed to writing.

INTERVIEWER

Mr. Wilder, why do you write?

WILDER

I think I write in order to discover on my shelf a new book which I would enjoy reading, or to see a new play that would engross me.

INTERVIEWER

Do your books and plays fulfill this expectation?

WILDER

No.

INTERVIEWER

They disappoint you?

WILDER

No, I do not repudiate them. I am merely answering your question—they do not fulfill *that* expectation. An author, unfortunately, can never experience the sensation of reading his own work as though it were a book he had never read. Yet with each new work that expectation is prompting me. That is why the first months of work on a new project are so delightful: you see the book already bound, or the play already produced, and you have the illusion that you will read

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or see it as though it were a work by another that will give you pleasure.

INTERVIEWER

Then all those other motivations to which other writers have confessed play no part in your impulse to write—sharing what experience has taught you, or justifying your life by making a thing which you hope to be good?

WILDER

Yes, I suppose they are present also, but I like to keep them below the level of consciousness. Not because they would seem pretentious, but because they might enter into the work as strain. Unfortunately, good things are not made by the resolve to make a good thing, but by the application to develop fitly the one specific idea or project which presents itself to you. I am always uncomfortable when in "studio" conversation, I hear young artists talking about "truth" and "humanity" and "what is art?", and most happy when I hear them talking about pigments or the timbre of the flute in its lower range or the spelling of dialects or James's "center of consciousness".

INTERVIEWER

Is there some final statement you would wish to make about the novel?

WILDER

I'm afraid that I have made no contribution toward the intention of this series of conversations on the art of the novel. I think of myself as a fabulist, not a critic. I realize that every writer is necessarily a critic,—that is, each sentence is a skeleton accompanied by enormous activity of rejection; and each selection is governed by general principles concerning truth, force, beauty and so on. But, as I have just suggested, I believe that the practice of writing consists in more and more relegating all that schematic operation to the subconscious. The critic that is in every fabulist is like the iceberg—nine-tenths of him is underwater. Yeats warned against probing into how

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and why one writes; he called it "muddying the spring". He quoted Browning's lines:

> "Where the apple reddens do not pry
> Lest we lose our Eden, you and I."

I have long kept a journal to which I consign meditations about the "omniscience of the novelist" and thoughts about how time can be expressed in narration, and so on. But I never re-read those entries. They are like the brief canters that a man would take on his horse during the days preceding a race. They inform the buried critic that I know he's there, that I hope he's constantly at work clarifying his system of principles, helping me when I'm not aware of it, and intimating that I hope he will not intrude on the day of the race.

Gertrude Stein once said laughingly that writing is merely "telling what you know". Well, that telling is as difficult an exercise in technique as it is in honesty; but it should emerge as immediately, as spontaneously, as *undeliberately* as possible.

—RICHARD H. GOLDSTONE

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(This is the sixteenth in a series on the Art of Fiction. Authors interviewed have included E. M. Forster, François Mauriac, Graham Greene, William Styron, Irwin Shaw, Alberto Moravia, Joyce Cary, Ralph Ellison, Georges Simenon, James Thurber, Nelson Algren, William Faulkner, Dorothy Parker, and Isak Dinesen.)

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BEN

In the beginning there was Ben, just Ben alone before Laura or Landis or the Spaniard, but before Ben there had been others living where Ben was to live. Living, cooking, eating, and burning lights in the middle of the night and descending and ascending the stairs and coming and going and taking their keys and putting them back again and paying their bills or not paying them and being quiet or noisy and predictable and erratic and walking the roof in spring. Oh, there had been many more and there would be many after, but these did not concern Ben for that was then, and what they had left behind them had already gone down the drain or out the window or between the boards in the floor or into the walls or through the mails, leaving only an oily spot, an oblong stain, a flake of glass, a breath of scent among many scents, both past and present which formed the odor and flavor and steady perfume of the Hotel de l'Avenir. They were long gone and only the pencil mark, and the overturned ink, and the rent in the curtain, and a bent coathanger lingered on to describe them. A scrap of paper, a safety pin, a calendar wedged between the floor and the table leg, a curtain ring. They were no longer where they had been, and now there was Ben.

When Ben first moved in, his friend Hank from the army that came over on the boat with him and went all over Norway

—Drawing by Reginald Pollack

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by Pati Hill

with him the summer before when they still had their bonuses and a little cash, was going to move in with him. Not in the same room, of course, because that was unhealthy. A man should never live too close onto another man even if he was a friend—in fact, even less if he was a friend—but into the next room which was vacant. They were going to do their cooking together and share the roof which would make a pleasant balcony in spring, and study together, and go to concerts, and learn French—not like the usual tourists but really get to know the language—and when the Bill ran out and they didn't have any more money they would be able to support themselves somehow till they felt like quitting and going back home, or whatever they decided they wanted to do afterward.

That was the idea. They were going to pool resources (Ben had a little more money than Hank) and do everything together as near as possible and see what it was all about. That's the way they figured when they were in Norway, and Ben found the room in this moderate priced hotel (it was six flights up but, what the hell, it was cleaner then most and you can't expect much for 350 francs a day) and they were about to move in when Hank fell in love.

Well, not exactly. Fell *back* in love, you might say, with the

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girl he was in love with all along, all through Scandinavia where he was forever telling Ben how glad he was to get rid of her, get out of the whole affair, to get on that boat and get the mess behind him. (He told Ben the whole history in the course of their trip: how it came about, and how she tricked him, and a whole lot of stuff, some of it true and some of it not, most likely.) He fell back in love with this girl because she sent him a letter saying she was coming over and would he meet her?

Of course, when he got her letter Hank said, to hell with it, and dropped it out the window and forgot about it and only answered because he felt that even if she gave him a raw deal he didn't want her to think he held anything against her, and when he went to get her the day the boat got in, it was the same way—he only did it out of decency—and he went on planning to move in next to Ben. He even brought his bags up and put his shoes under the bed and his clothes in the closet and it was all settled, but when he went off to the train, Ben took everything out and carried it into his own room and told the woman at the desk his friend wasn't moving to the hotel, because he knew better.

When Hank came back two nights later he said, "You had a lot of nerve! Christ, if she waves it in my nose I'm not going to say no, but Goddamn it, Ben, you needn't have given up the room. *Now* where am I going to stay?" But Ben just said, "Stop shooting off your mouth, pal, and have a beer," and Hank went off saying, "See what you can do to fix it up about that room," but Ben didn't trouble himself.

Once when Ben came in from a walk in the park where he had gotten into the habit of taking bread to the pigeons, he knew that Hank had been there because he had carted off some of his junk. Otherwise, though, he didn't turn up again till he came to invite Ben to dinner, rather sheepish about it. To dinner with the two of them.

They had a room over by the Sorbonne on a long dark hall that stank of lavatory and a window that looked out on a dark bare court and crazy wallpaper peeling off and no hot water or heat but they kept warm with an alcohol stove and a gas

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radiator—it was still autumn—and cooked and washed and ate and slept in a corner by the broken lavabo. They seemed to know everyone in the place and there was a crowd that kept coming out and in a while they ate on the top of her trunk with light from a candle stuck in a Chianti bottle. Ben could not see in this girl with brown hair and glasses any of the things that Hank had told him about her, least of all the bitchiness, but he did not think this odd because he was never able to see in people the qualities that other people found in them—another reason for which he felt himself to be set apart from the world—and when Hank saw him to the door, down the narrow steps past the stinking latrine and through the waterstained passage to the entrance the way he might have seen him down the wooden steps and across the grass of an autumn evening in Iowa, across the cricket singing grass in Iowa far away, he just said, "Thanks for the feed, Hank," and waved his hand.

"Great to see you," Hank said, "drop around any time any old time you feel like it—Dorothy and I are always here," (it was the first time he called her by her name and they both winced standing in the chill of autumn beside the sleeping bicycles and a motorbike covered over with canvas) "Dorothy and I are always here."

"Swell," said Ben and even as his voice said he wouldn't he knew he would. Drop around to see Hank and Dorothy.

Before the war when Ben was working on a newspaper in Milwaukee, he had the only protracted affair he ever had with a young woman he met in an art class where he went once a week in the evening, chiefly to enjoy a look at the nude models they had there. (Young—she was about 30 then, a year or so older than himself.) Not that he was lascivious or anything. Hell, if he felt like he needed a little piece he wasn't such a boy that he didn't know where to go for it. It was just that he liked looking at them sitting there or standing on the stand with a couple of pottery jars and a scarf, sitting or squatting or standing for 15 minutes at a time in the draft (they must have been pretty tough or needed the money a

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lot), and he never tried to date them up or even to talk to them except sometimes to go over and rearrange the draperies or something like that—he often did that—and when he did he was always very polite calling them "miss" and behaving even more formally than if they had had their clothes on (that gave him a sort of kick—being very grave and formal with the girls sitting there on the stand in a hairpin). No, he didn't try to date them and he didn't even think of it most of the time, but he liked to look at them and make marks on the paper with the charcoal, like doodling during a telephone conversation, then smoking a cigarette between sittings and talking to the other students and going sometimes for a coke with some of them after, for he was a lonely cuss even then. Didn't know how to approach people really unless they had something to do together, some ordinary usual thing to say that made a bridge. The more ordinary the better, because like that there wasn't any reason for saying anything you didn't want to and at the same time you had the pleasure of speech. He never went out with the really arty bunch, the ones that went with the prof to some place and talked art and life. He stayed with the hangers on. The other amateurs. The ones that came for the kicks and the ones that came to doodle, like him.

Dora was one of these, and he got to know her only because the nights he went straight home they walked up the same street for about four blocks and then caught the same streetcar. At first he didn't notice, and then when he did he began to walk faster or slower so as not to seem to be following her or waiting for her, and then after a while—after he had said "hello" to her a couple of times—he walked *with* her not to seem to be wanting to avoid her. That is all there was to it. They walked together, talked together a couple of times in class where she told him how good she thought his drawing was which up to then he had never thought about a second time, and went to a concert together and he was hooked.

The first time he slept with her was in his room in a two family house on the outskirts of town where he lived with a couple who knew him before he came to Milwaukee. He did

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not know if they ever found out about it or not. Hell, the guy must have known, but that was neither here nor there. He was sorry after he got her into the room, and they looked for a while at his books and sketches to show that neither of them thought the real thing was the going to bed and afterwards he was sorrier still because she looked so pathetic, like the models at art school. She had very thin blonde hair, that is the main thing he carried with him of her forever afterward, and before she brushed it you could see straight through to the scalp and it made him feel just terrible.

They went on sleeping together for a while after that, very impersonally, looking at pictures and books, but he did not know he was in love with her until she had flu and stayed at home for a week and he began to miss her comments on his pictures and their discussions and so forth. Then the thing that surprised him was how she changed. How much she changed after she was sick and he went and found her and took her a bunch of chrysanthemums and told her the best way he could that he was in love with her. What a difference it made.

She stopped encouraging him with his sketching and stopped coming to art class and wanted him to stop too. She stopped discussing and exercising her mind and reverted to type, reverted to the type all women are at heart if you came right down to it, and tried to get him to spend more time on his job and stop throwing his money around and get a place to live and get married. She didn't say for a long time about getting married but it was there from the first, from the moment he fell in love with her and she knew he was in love with her and she had flu and he brought that bunch of flowers.

But she made a mistake. She made her mistake when she built him up in the first place, made him begin to take an interest in his painting, not just go to class to while away the time and be sociable. She made a mistake when she put it into his mind he was really good, and she paid for it. Paid for her honesty and generosity (he was pretty cynical even then), or rather she would have paid for it, if the war hadn't come along to take him away anyway, just in the nick of time. She paid all right. And that is what he told himself that winter in the

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Hotel de l'Avenir when it was cold and the rain came down and the drafts came in and the fog was so thick you could hardly see out the window.

He could tell the world for that matter, (if ever the world should ask him) and that is what he had to console himself with when Hank went off with Dorothy. Whatever happened, whatever went and came, whatever transpired in the coming years, he knew nothing like that would happen to *him*.

Ben Burton was born on a fine sunny day in the month of October in a small town in Iowa, beneath a maple. Not really beneath a maple, but in a house in a street in a living room overhung by maple, falling falling falling in the fall of the year. Falling on the pavement in the fall of the year, and this is what he could hear if he could hear anything the day he was born—the swish of people going by on the pavement in the leaves of the maple. In the circle of leaves that fell from the tree next to the pavement in the month of October when he was born. If Ben Burton heard anything it was that. Ben! cried his friends of an evening after he had got into the world and established himself as Ben Burton beneath a maple of a spring evening. Ben, come on down and play. Ben, Ben, Ben, his name soared into the fading sky of an April evening. And into the December sky too, though not so high. Ben, Ben, they said after he was born, they learned to say after he was born in the spot where he was born—those that came after and those that came before in the same place—Ben, they learned to say, and forever after they thought the name belonged to him. I knew a boy called Ben once, they would say years later, back in Denning Iowa... It was never the same of course, only someone else with the name of Ben, rightfully all be it, though not to them. But rightfully or spitefully it brought him back to the circle of red leaves beneath the maple in the town of Denning, Iowa. It was his Heritage.

It was still autumn when Ben came to the hotel and Hank didn't. Late autumn, but autumn still with a few fine days left in it and when the sun shone in the afternoon Ben would take his alcohol stove and a cushion from his bed and a frying pan and a couple of dishes and a book through the french windows and make his lunch out on the roof.

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First though, he would put on his leather jacket and his broad-rimmed hat and go down into the street, down the six winding flights and into the shops to search for food. Two eggs in a paper bag, two hard rolls or a baguette, a couple of pieces of sausage and a pastry done up in a cone-shaped package that dangled from his finger on a thin blue string. It did not take him long to buy the main provisions, standing politely in line behind the housewives in their aprons and sweaters, but it took him longer to make up his mind about the pastry. There were not so many of them. He could name them all by their proper names and he knew what was in every one except the ones made like houses or swans or vegetables, but still it was hard to come to a decision. So he would go and stand for a while before the window looking in, looking over the rows of little tarts and cakes, turning them over in his mind, bending down his head at the top of his long gaunt body until he knew exactly what he wanted. Then he would go and ask for it by name and they would wrap it up, into a pyramid tied with a string and slip it over his finger.

"Un Baba au rhum, s'il vous plait, Mademoiselle".

"Merci, Monsieur!" It made a pleasant moment in his day, and sometimes he bought a chocolate or two at the chocolate shop across the street but not often. He had to watch his budget.

One afternoon while he was lunching thus on the roof a girl came out of the room across the hall from his and stood for a moment on the other side of the railing and looked down into the street. He guessed she had moved in that morning. She had short red hair and pale-rimmed glasses and wore a scarf with the Eiffel Tower printed on it in green.

"Just move in?" Ben asked her.

"Yes," she said, "and I'm just moving out again. Damn the French anyway."

"Well, you can't expect much for the price," Ben said reasonably, and later he told her where he bought his alcohol stove and saucepan and helped her unstop the drain in the lavabo.

"It won't do any permanent good," he told her. "These

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things are worn out. I'll leave you the wire though, and you can do it yourself when it needs it. The main thing, you've got to push it all the way down around the turn in the pipe like this, see? Take and shove it down carefully till it goes up the other side then pull it." He emptied the haircombings and toothbrush bristles and safety pins and threads of cotton wool that were glued together with soap and dirt into a clean piece of typing paper and put them in the wire waste basket beside the lavabo, then he tried to fix the radiator but it turned out it didn't have a handle so he had to let it go till he got his hands on a pair of pliers. He had all those things—pliers and hammer and screwdriver and so forth—in a canvas bag he had in the army but he had lent them to Hank and they were over there.

All the time she was laughing and saying, "Damn the French," he had the impression she was crying and he had to keep turning to see if she was or not. Turning his face from the lavabo to look at her and see she wasn't.

"If you want anything I'm in number 65," he told her. "I'm there most of the time unless I go out for something. If you want anything just bang on my door." As a woman she didn't give him the least feeling. From her accent he guessed she was from the West somewhere.

She *did* knock on his door during the week that followed. She wanted him to help her move the armoire across the room opposite her bed where there was more space and afterward they drank coffee together made on her stove with her new saucepan which had still the taste of a new saucepan which his had had a short time before and the price marked on it, though hers was a more expensive model (he knew because he had priced them all) with a top that went with it and she used Nescafe with an American mark. It seemed she had worked for one of the American agencies in Paris before coming to live at the Hotel de l'Avenir. She had quite a lot of things like that, Kleenex and Dutch Cleanser and Cashmere Bouquet soap and Jergen's Lotion and aspirin tablets that she kept on the top of a locker trunk covered with a cloth.

That evening he invited her to dine, more out of kindness than anything else. She seemed lonely though he didn't

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know just why, always talking about her friends at the ECA.

They went to the more expensive of the two restaurants he patronized in the vicinity of the hotel. On the way he made it clear to her that he didn't have much money to throw around, so when they went to the movies later, she paid her own way. He was going to if she hadn't offered, but she offered and when they got back he gave her a brandy in his room to show how he had fixed it up with the map from Air France and the reproduction of Van Gogh he bought beside the Seine. And then he told her about his painting and showed her one he had behind the bed.

She put back on her glasses that she had taken off and backed away from it, saying it was a pity not to see it in the daylight but he told her he always painted at night. "I got into the habit of it when I was going to art school in Milwaukee," he told her. "I didn't have time to paint in the day then and I got to like the quiet. I paint after everyone goes to bed and things settle down."

"Well, don't let me keep you from working," she said, getting up. He could not tell if the acidity in her voice were directed at him or if it were only a part of her, but there was something about the tone that reminded him. Something he could not put his finger on.

"Oh, you won't," he said. "I never let anything get in the way of my work but I don't begin till late. Go on and have another brandy," but she was already on her feet.

At the door, standing under the light by the washbasin he got her in his arms and tried to kiss her, heaven knows why. She didn't seem like much of a woman to him and when she pushed him away he let her go. He never tried to strong arm anybody—if she didn't want to, she didn't want to—and she didn't seem annoyed. But the next day when he got up about 11 o'clock and went down the hall to see if she wanted coffee, she didn't answer. Later he tried again and she opened the door and when she saw who was there she said, "Oh, it's *you*, well I'm going out," and brushed past him and went down stairs, jogging a little in her crepe-soled shoes. While she was out he wrote a note on a piece of paper, "Dear Laura, I hope

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you aren't sore because of last night. I didn't mean it, I don't even know why I did it. Just habit I guess. Come on let's be friends. Coffee on the stove if you want some, Ben," and slipped it under her door.

She spoke to him after that, but the queer thing was that, whereas before she had just seemed huffy, after the note she really seemed to hate him. Sometimes she would even come down the hall and knock on his door while he was sitting there working, but he could be sure whenever she did it was just to borrow something. He was sorry because they could have had a nice friendship. Oh, nothing like *that*. Just taking their meals together sometimes and being friendly. It was better to be friendly if you lived on the same floor, especially with the winter coming on and not going out so much. Still, if she felt that way there was nothing to be done, so after he tried a couple of times more he forgot about it.

Landis came to live at the hotel in November (funny name for a girl, Ben knew a man by that name once back in Iowa but never a girl). The latter part of November in the room next to Laura. He remembered this because it was the week the steam heat went off. Something got the matter with the boiler or the coal ran out or something and for several days there wasn't any heat—three or four days, something like that—not really serious and he wouldn't have paid much attention if he hadn't heard the girl on the telephone that connected with downstairs raising hell. "S'il voo play, soyez si gentil de me dire combien de temps ça doit durer. Vraiment, Madame, on ne peut pas restez ici sans chauffage, vous comprenez... qu'est ce qui se passe avec cette machine là-bas?" Ben wondered why she didn't move and be done with it. Maybe she had paid her rent in advance. They would go on for half a day then suddenly it would seem to come over her and she would lift up the telephone and start in and after a while when they wouldn't answer any more she would leave her room and fly down the stairs, her hair sailing out behind her as if it was afraid of being left. Ben could hear everything that went on because she never seemed to close her door

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except when the one in the high collar came. When he came he would close it behind him when he entered, usually carrying a little paper of pastries at exactly five o'clock in the afternoon, and the way he closed the door Ben could not tell whether he did it on purpose or just because he was a man who closed a door after him. Anyway he always closed it and if Ben came out of his room in the afternoon and the door was closed he knew High Collar was there. That was after he got them sorted out. The good-looking German, the nervous Frenchman and the one in the fur coat that might be anything. Sometimes High Collar and the Frenchman were there at the same time and when they were there at the same time Ben could hear a lot of scuffling and laughing going on and he didn't know what they could be doing.

Ben wondered about Landis a lot but he did not ever try to get to know her because whatever she was doing in there she did not need him. When they passed in the hall he nodded sometimes though usually she didn't see him, and he went on about his business. She was like the arty ones and the successful ones and all the ones he had known but not known in his life that had no room for him and not knowing her did not pique him the way not knowing Laura did. Did not make him boil inside when he thought of the conceit of women (that's why Laura didn't want to know him, it was her conceit, her false conceit because he tried to kiss her that time). No, he just did not exist for this girl Landis and he did not care though he couldn't help wondering. Wondering and overhearing her conversations on the telephone and watching her fly down the stairs like something was after her. And after she left he missed her. Not consciously or feelingly or anything but the way a person might miss a lamp post that had been there all along then suddenly disappeared.

Then for a while there was a guy next door—a Spic—also an artist who was putting up at the hotel while he looked for a place to work in. Funny bastard. Painted only in straight lines on sheet-metal, he told Ben, and showed him some of his designs. Used ordinary housepainting brushes and enamel paint and his latest work was six feet by nine. That was why

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he couldn't live in the hotel like Ben and just work out on the roof or in his room. He had to have space.

"Why do you paint so big?" Ben asked him.

"I don't know," the boy told him. "I don't seem to be able to feel free any other way."

When Ben asked him why he didn't use curves though, it took him half the night explaining. In a couple more years, he told Ben, he hoped he would have got to a point where he could extract the Final Essence out of Art so there wouldn't be anything more left to do. Right now he was trying to cut down on color, just using red, blue and yellow and at the end he would not use anything except black and white. It made Ben feel uncomfortable listening to him and he probably wouldn't have spent so much time chewing the rag with him if it hadn't been for its being a break in the silence.

Once back in Iowa when Ben was about eight years old, his father took him and his two older brothers and a couple of the neighbor's kids that were about their age on a picnic over by Falls Creek where the creek and a stream came together to make a kind of muddy basin big enough for people to swim around in. A kind of secret place down in amongst the reeds and the blackberry bushes with frogs and lily pads.

Nobody had a bathing suit except his Pop who had an old one left over from when he was at Atlantic Beach on his honeymoon, because there wasn't any swimming in that part of the country, but Pop said it would be ok if they all stripped to their bvds and went in like that. His brothers and the other boys took off their clothes almost the minute they got there and hung them on the blackberry bushes and went splashing their way in up to their necks, flailing out their arms and churning up the water and having a great old time, but at the last minute Ben didn't want to go in. He took off his clothes all right and hung them up and danced around the bank yelling and shouting and splashing the others, but he didn't want to go in. He didn't want to get himself into that old muddy water. "Come on in Ben," they kept yelling, "come on in, you don't know what you're missing," and his Pop said, "Come on in Ben boy, you don't want the kids to think you're a sissy, do you?" But

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Ben wouldn't go in until his Pop got really mad and came out of the water in his old bathing suit that the moths had been at and got him and took him out into the middle and ducked him.

It was awful. He had water in his nose and mouth and filling up his ears and it felt like ice coming onto him hot as he was from the june day sun, and his brothers and the other boys stood around and splashed him every time he tried to stand up. In a few minutes he got his breath though and began splashing around himself and found he liked it.

"Hey looka me," he kept yelling, "looka me, I can almost swim!" long after the others had climbed out and dried themselves on the towel leaving long muddy streaks everywhere it swept along their bodies. "Hey looka me!" he kept yelling, paddling about, feeling the soft brown mud beneath his feet not caring if it was cold or not. "I'm gonna learn to swim!" He didn't even want to come out for lunch because all the time he felt as if he was just on the verge of something. It was about the most exciting thing he ever felt.

But after lunch, after they had waited an hour like his old man said and the others went back, Ben had lost his enthusiasm again and just sat on the bank and his Pop let him, seeing how he had been in once. "Leave him alone," he said to the others. "Leave him be. If he don't want to come in he don't have to. Leave him do what he feels like," so he just sat thinking how cold the water was and how he probably wouldn't be able to get the feeling back he had before about being just on the verge of learning to swim and he was not willing to risk it.

Now his Pop was dead and his brothers owned a mechanic shop up in Ipswich and worked like blacks from one day's end to the other and Ben could not remember who the other boys were although he dreamed about them sometimes. About the picnic down by the water hole where the two streams came together and the briars grew around. Dreamed about them and saw their faces and felt the water on his skinny arms and heard the shouting.

It was one of the things he remembered.

During the week Ben tried pretty much to stick to routine. Get up at 11:30, make himself a pot of coffee—enough to

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last for the day—eat a couple of croissants then dress and clean up his room.

The hotel was supposed to do that but they never got around to the regulars till afternoon and it was easier to clean it up than sit around in the mess. That's how he figured it at first and later, when he began looking forward to seeing Jeanette, the maid, he was glad to have it done so she could sit and talk with him for a minute. Sometimes she even stopped for a cup of tea and that way it gave him the feeling he was doing something for her when he tidied his own things in the morning. Not that she did any more for her wages than she could get away with, he guessed, but then who was he to say?

In the afternoons he was free to go out and walk around the streets of Paris looking at the sights, going through the churches (he had been through all the famous ones and started in on the little ones) or into some particular section of the Louvre if it was raining. Sometimes he went to a fair or the Flea Market, or often enough he just walked along, map in hand, in some chosen direction until he got to the place he was headed for and then sit down and order a beer and look at the people. Funny bastards sitting around, he wondered what they all did with themselves and he might have asked them if his French had been better but the way things were it relieved him of conversation without making him feel sad.

He saw a lot of Paris that way. A lot more than the people who came over with plenty of money and an automobile to ride around in, though of course pinching his pennies the way he had to, he didn't get to see any of the high spots or anything like that, but he did take in several cultural events such as the play by Racine, and on Saturdays he went out with Hank and Dorothy. Fell into the habit either of going to see them for dinner or taking them out for a beer or so. Not that he enjoyed it especially or even had much feeling about them when he came to think of it. Hank had changed a lot since the summer before and Dorothy was always so—well, sort of terribly glad to see him. It was something like paying a visit on relatives. He had to be polite and admiring, noticing

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what they had done to make the place over, and naturally Dorothy was smart enough never to leave them alone but what the hell, it was something to do and he went.

Sometimes on the way over he would stop at a store and buy some little present, some box of that or this, nothing they needed, and Dorothy would cry, making her voice a kind of squeak, "Oh Ben, you shouldn't have. You needn't have, you know. It's enough to have your *visit*!" Now isn't that just like a woman, Ben would grin, carrying on, being ridiculous and once again he would congratulate himself on keeping his freedom. Not letting himself get hooked.

"Man," he would say later to Hank while shovelling down his omelet or his steak, "you sure have it easy," by which Hank knew he was being teased, and Dorothy would look at them, slyly from under her lashes as if wary of the compliment.

"Wait," she would say laughing a little self-consciously, "till you see how I've done the peas," and she would start rattling off some recipe about taking this and that and boiling them together until, soothed by the sound, she was once again at her ease.

Oh Ben knew it all from a to izzard. Learned the whole technique from his auntie's knee and if ever he got Hank alone one day he would put it up to him. Ask him straight out if he'd gone and fallen for the old routine. Remind him of all those fine plans they'd made together. How they were going to learn French and paint and everything. It was a shame to see the guy so taken in, peeling potatoes and careful where he put his cigarettes, but then generally when they parted later under some lamp or other on the street, Dorothy looking back over her shoulder calling, "Goodbye Ben, goodbye Ben dear, come over soon," in that certain voice as if she was calling across the street in Iowa he would forget. Forget while the words, warm and soft, tickled him in his ears.

Sometimes like that with the fog coming up and the streetlight dim he could almost see the point in it and once, coming home from the opera, in fact, where the three of them had gone on Dorothy's birthday (Ben got the tickets free) he had

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had to admit to himself that she was within an ace of being downright pretty. Oh not that she wasn't a little peaked even in her velvet dress and the earrings made like a gipsy's—something about the neck that wasn't the size for her head—but there had been something so shining and eager. Something alive in the face. They had gone to a place across from the opera after to have their drinks and it had cost them a mint of money because there was Dorothy, program in hand, standing on the steps in the rain and she wanted to go to some place in the vicinity and afterwards they had taken a taxi to keep from spoiling her shoes. Of course it was silly throwing their cash around like that—after all it wasn't as if she'd never have a birthday again even in Paris the way she said—but nevertheless there was something about it—about her eyes and her shoes and the rain and the way she held the program up under her chin that stuck with him even after he had left them and got back to the hotel and climbed up to his room and he could not stop thinking about it.

Thinking and remembering and looking around him like an animal in the cage. Jesus it made him depressed. The walls so bare and dingy and the mirror reflecting the same. Not even his painting seemed any good. Just dauby and grey without any expression, the half-finished sketch of the old lady with the cats looking like a sketch of any old woman. No feeling.

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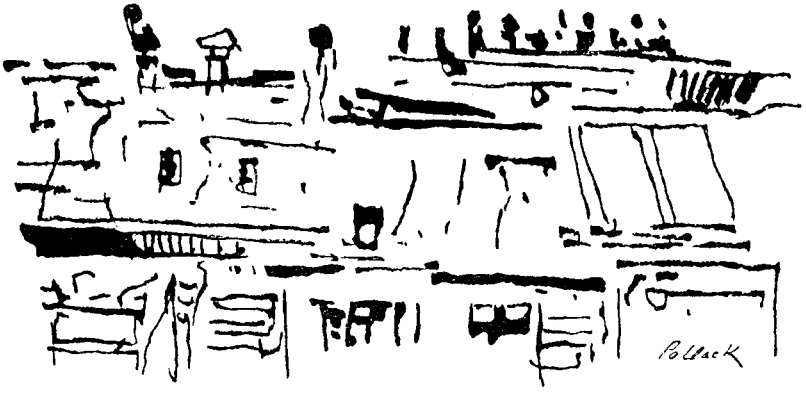
Nothing. He felt like going and opening up the window and throwing the whole mess out and going out with them. What the hell? What was the use of it all anyway? Scrimping and saving. Better to forget the whole business and go out on the town and he thought of Jeanette and what she would say ("Look," he would tell her, "I've got an idea. First you go and get yourself a dress... something nice, maybe velvet...").

But in a minute it was gone again, passed off like a sudden fever. Gone again in brushing his teeth and running the water into the basin and hanging his coat up and laying his trousers out. Gone in the million and one things a person did in the course of getting undressed. Gone like everything else, and melted away and when Jeanette came to clean the next morning he did not even offer her the thousand like he planned (to buy a little present for yourself). Not that it wasn't a good idea, but it could wait. He had better things to do just now than throw his money around and in the spring when the sun came out he sat once more upon the roof and drank his wine and ate his sandwiches and bought his pastries and walked up and down stairs and through the streets and studied his grammar and made sketches and watched the leaves turn green and later, when Hank went home and Dorothy went off to live with somebody else in some other hotel cooking and washing and peeling potatoes and using Chianti bottles to hold her candles, he hardly noticed from where he sat high up on the top floor of the L'Avenir. No, he hardly even noticed. Anyhow not enough to cause him any pain.



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TWENTY-SEVEN

I went this morning, this
white arc of year now nearly come whole here,
again to seek those sites
of digging and great-armed construction crews
building among their sweats
the stuff of days, the suns, the weights in breath.

So that last year's raw field,
one summer's loam exposed into the light,
lies covered and secure
against the grasses and the aching heat,
and this year's building breaks
out to the air another field's wormed heart,
another summer's earth.

I saw this morning, this vast stone of year
ingrowing firmly here,
men totally involved in poured cement
and blaze of scaffolding
across the dusty bleaches of the day,
and followed them beyond
their building hands and Polish summer-mouths,
come quitting, to their beer.

I knew this morning other fields broke torn
for structures to be worked
brickward and coolly shadowy within
as testimony to
each day gone building here yet lost to us
but for this weight in breath;
knew nothing whole except the year evolved
slowly and dark with love,
my every root passed singing in the deep.
And still I wholly knew
nothing we joined our hands to as those men
stained in their undershirts

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and coming every morning of a year
from rows of houses on
the Jersey side to work and live by this;
knew not a brick we set,
a board beneath the sun we struck with nails,
to stay a summer night
should we be out in it and it came down.

—HERBERT MORRIS

●

ESCAPE STORY

Those only who were bored as Ulysses
Ever came home. The remnant soldiering on
Dwelt on the pet names round their hated seas,

Spent their last leaves fixing last thoughts upon
Empty landing grounds of memory
(The public read of occupations gone):

Ceasing then as pilots and infantry
Created incidents on cafe floors.
Missions went every week with plans to see

Local celebrities behind closed doors,
Were flattered by the madam's grin and stayed;
New sentimentalists procured new wars.

After the safe return for which we prayed
Penelope kept busy just the same,
Though now she couldn't tell us what she made,
And sometimes Ulysses forgot her name.

—JOHN MILES

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TAL COAT

Born in Brittany and honored last year as France's representative to the Biennale in Venice, PIERRE TAL COAT *is a patient painter, and patience implies caution and deliberacy. Nor does it exclude meticulousness. To be sure, his is not the patience of the mathematician progressing toward the solution, but rather, one might say, that of the birdwatcher cultivating the readiness which will enable him to catch the instant of soaring. Tal Coat lives by and in nature. Nature is his subject. But he shuns direct representation of it as a kind of cruelty: like setting traps.*

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What we see in his paintings and drawings are signs of nature or, more precisely, signs toward it: timid yet sure, tentative yet alert, conciliatory gestures. And like a bird, nature answers the appeal, briefly, lightly—the time of a wing's turn. Tal Coat offers us not aspects, but moments, passages of nature. Incomplete, yes: still, they are among the rare works to provide an intimation of what the harmony of man and elements may have been, in prehistoric ages, before the divorce occurred. The lines have a pristine simplicity, the light is of morning—perhaps a first morning. When we call them 'abstract', we merely show how much we have lost the sense of the immediate.

—PIERRE SCHNEIDER

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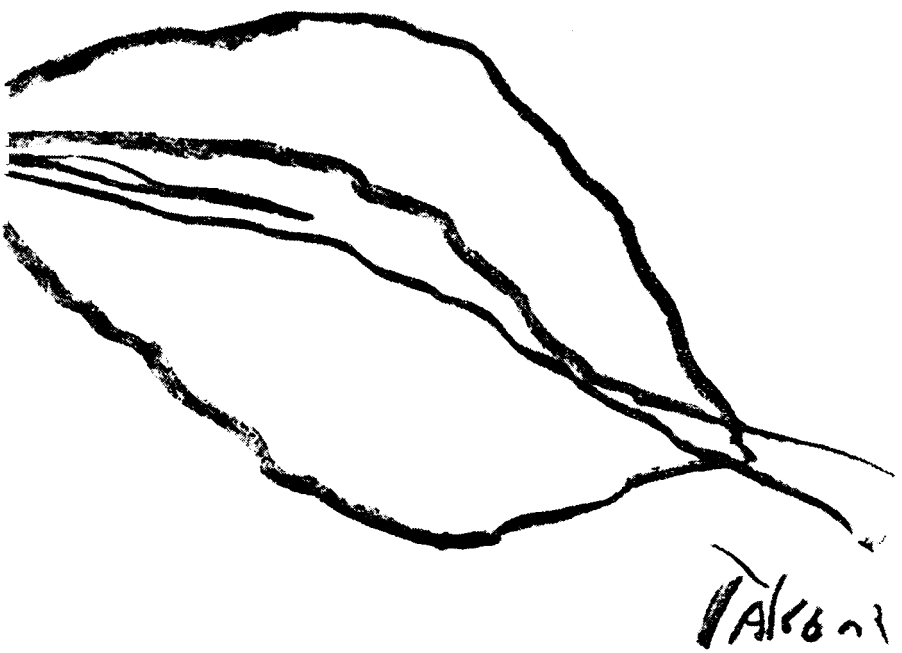

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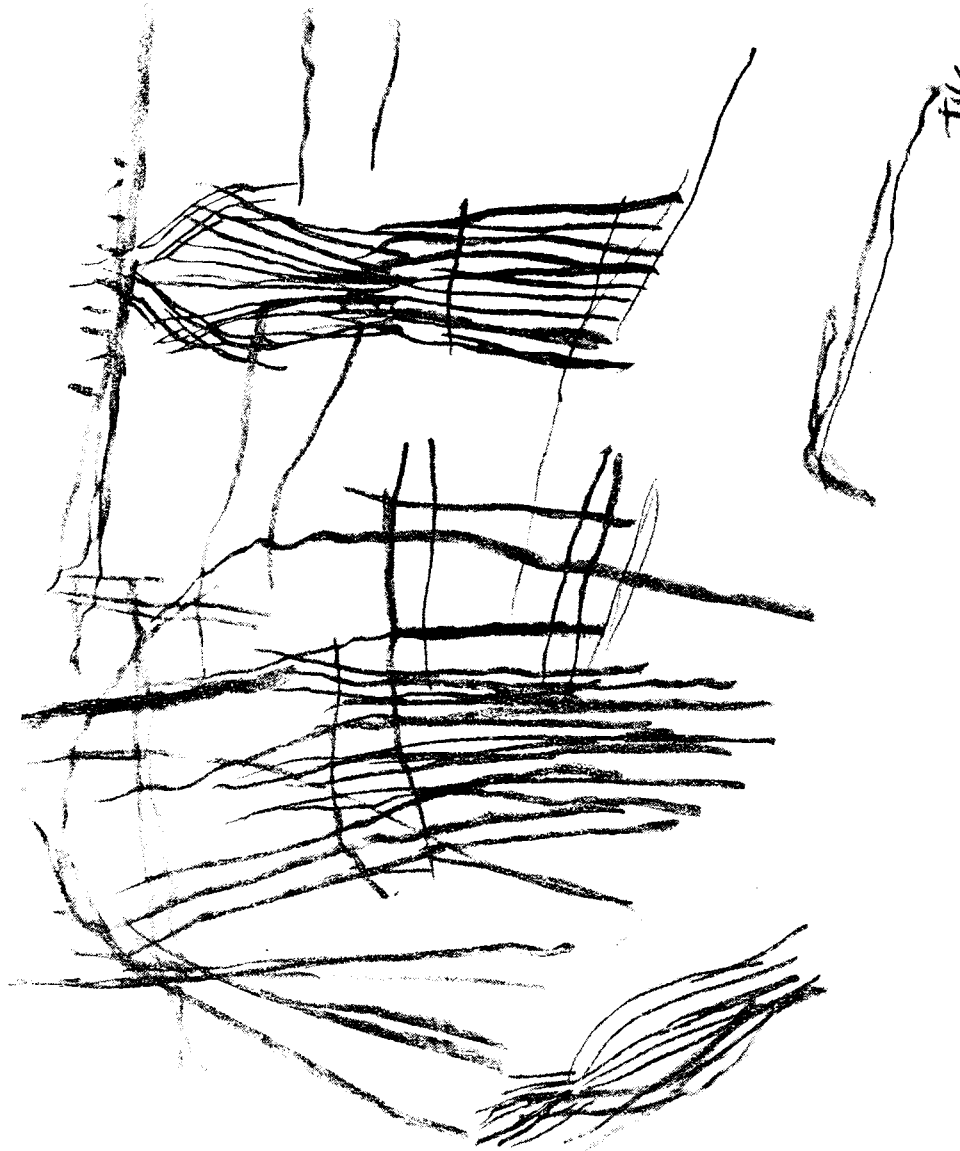

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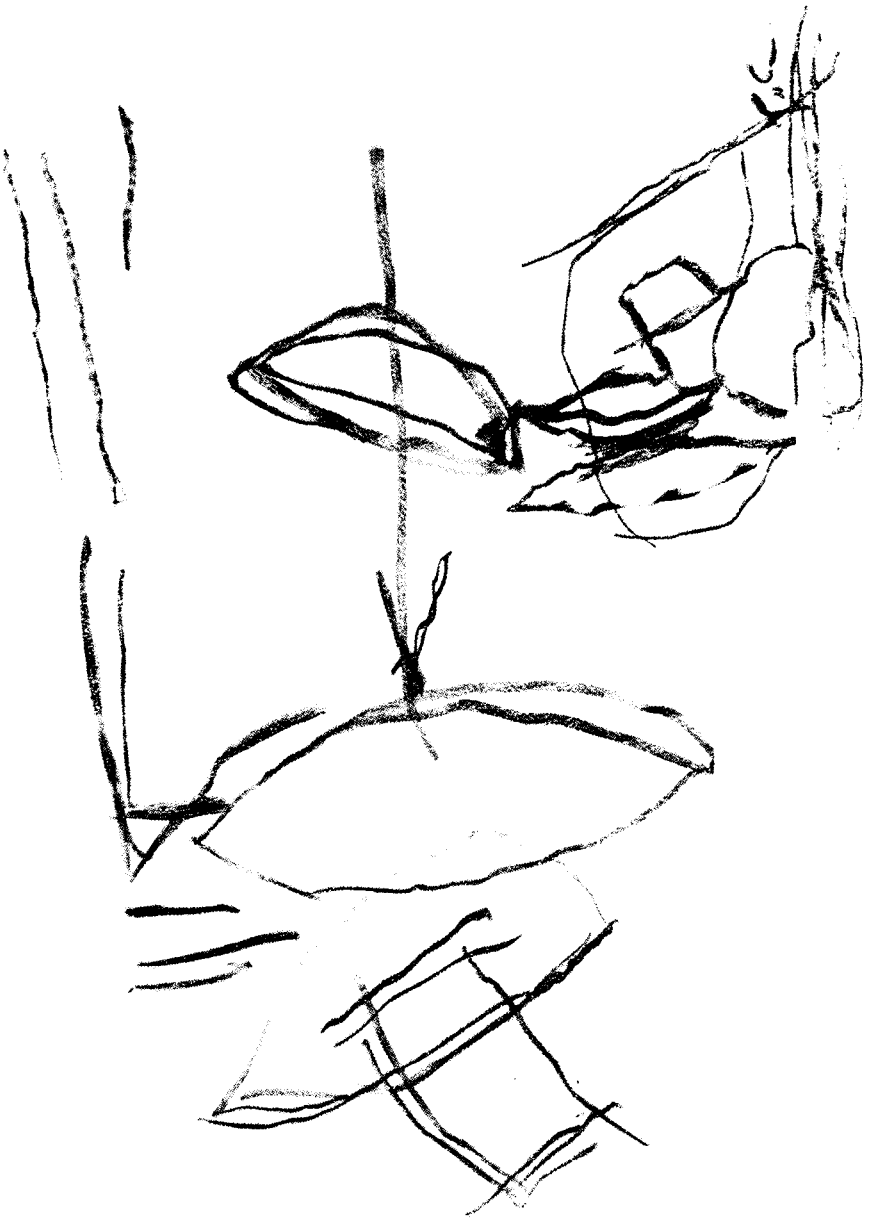

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FROM "MISÉRABLE MIRACLE"

BY HENRI MICHAUX

HENRI MICHAUX, the famous French poet and painter, has long been interested in the effects of mescaline, the drug derived from the Peyotl cactus which traditionally has been taken by the Indians of Mexico and the American Southwest to induce ecstatic religious visions. More recently it has attracted the interest of psychologists investigating the physical roots of mental disorder and of Aldous Huxley who describes his experiences with it in The Doors of Perception.

"I first took mescaline," Michaux has said, "to see if I was capable of having luminous and colorful visions. I considered myself a kind of cripple: all my dreams and inner mental images are in dull grey." But after a few minutes under the drug he decided that the search for luminous images was secondary to the possibilities of the drug for exploring the mind itself. "What immediately interested me," he says, "was the rapport between the image and the idea, between the wish to see something and what one sees. In mescaline one finds an independent consciousness with its own world of images. One learns what it is both to have and not have a will."

Over a period of six months starting in January 1955, Michaux, a small and delicate looking man in his fifties, took the drug four times. Lying in a darkened room in his flat in a fine old hotel particulier *on the rue Seguier, he scribbled jagged little notes of his impressions. Unlike Huxley he found that the most striking effects were not profound transformations of external objects but rather the inner visions which poured through his mind like a weirdly agitated and vibrating film, often seeming to possess his whole being. During the first three experiments, scenes of incredibly high and numerous building and of tropical oceans would be followed by pure and intense colors—an absolute and maddening white, an enveloping green. Constantly changing and vibrating compositions of lines, geometric forms, and colors would appear, repeat themselves, and then evolve symmetrically into new patterns, sometimes engulfing his consciousness to the point where he felt himself a part of the vision.* "Je suis composé d'alveoles de vert...,"

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he wrote during the first experiment, "je me termine en vert." *Describing a later vision of being caught in fluid pouring through an endless furrow, he wrote,* "Moi-meme, j'étais torrent, j'étais noyé, j'étais navigation." *Floods of contradictory, urgent, and often upsetting impulses would seize him: for instance, to telephone someone, then not to; or, to enumerate dozens of words ending in* able. *In another phase of the drug, grotesque tableaux would appear. Some 50 trumpeters ridiculously dressed in blue and rose would be seen playing to an audience half as large as the town of Orleans, looked down on from 40 tiers of balconies.*

In June, taking the drug for the fourth time, he accidentally mixed a dose six times the usual strength. The record of this experience which appears below is taken from the final chapter, entitled Schizophrenie Experimentale, *of* Misérable Miracle, *Michaux's book on mescaline published in France last year.*

Along with the text are six previously unpublished drawings of the visions produced by the drug. These were not made while undergoing the full effects but immediately afterward. "*It is impossible to think of moving the hand to draw while in the shock phase,*" *Michaux says,* "*but the vibrations persist for weeks.*" *An abstemious man who usually takes no coffee, tea, tobacco or liquor, and very little wine, Michaux is now finished with his mescaline experiments. He did not find them pleasant.* "*After a while the effects of the drug, at least for me, are terribly fatiguing and enervating,*" *he said recently,* "*and for a complex man who has within him contradictory tendencies and urges, each experiment can be a severe test.*"

—*R. B. S.*

* * *

THROUGH AN ERROR OF CALCULATION I swallowed six times what is for me a sufficient dose. I was not aware of it at once. Eyes closed, I watched in myself, as on a screen or a ship's log, the colors and the lines, this time gigantic, of Mescaline appearing in my inner vision, and the agitation of the images, always so amazing. Then suddenly, nothing any longer. I saw nothing. I had slipped down to some bottom. A door, open till now, had suddenly closed in absolute silence.

Mescaline again. Six months later I take six ampoules, that is, 0.6 gr. the miserable becomes the appalling miracle.

The images

Suddenly everything vanishes

What is it? What has happened? Taken by surprise, the general staff loses sight of its troops. More defenseless than a cork dancing on

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rough waters, more vulnerable than a little boy advancing against a column of tanks debouching onto the road.

The waves of the mescalinian ocean had broken over me, buffeting me, tumbling and tossing me like grains of sand: The movements, which till now had been in my vision, were *on top* of me. It had not lasted more than ten seconds and it was done. I was lost.

But just a minute. Let's not be in such a hurry. The torture is going to last for hours. It has not even begun. It is half-past one. I am not yet aware that I am about to come to grips with the mind's severest test.

Innocent, like a tourist, I watch the first changes. Calmly, I observe the queer internal tremblings which I know already, which I recognize. I notice the beginnings of the shreddings I am probably soon going to see, the horses' mouth sensation, and that over by the window, with curtains only partly drawn, great dazzling white sheets seem to be fluttering.

While my descent into hell, unknown to me, is being prepared

In my chest there is a deeper respiration, prelude to a different kind of "attention."

Lines, more and more lines, which I am not sure I really see, though already distinct and fine (which I feel?) which I begin to see (how tenuous they are this time!) and how ample their curves, so very ample! I notice that at moments they disappear and again their amplitude, really extraordinary compared with their thinness, and I know that the color white, which I am soon going to see, will be slightly violet, though I can still see nothing but the light, light gray of the spidery threads which boldly, rhythmically, incessantly stride over empty space.

Really enormous the amplitude of the sinuosities, and so very fine the lines, which could nevertheless step over houses. Something that has never been seen before! I feel like telephoning B. to tell him about this formidable sight. I give up the idea for fear of interrupting for too long this extraordinary hour. Then this thought of telephoning, this thought of hardly more than a dozen seconds ago, begins to recede, quickly and gravely, taking on at the same time an extreme importance, like the last traveler on the station platform in your native city as you are leaving, whom you see from the train which is imperturbably, irrevocably starting to move. Such is this progressive moving away. It is still there, the thought, like an echo, as though it were at the other end of the nave of a great silent church (that of

distancing of a thought

echo

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time) and would send back to me not the sound but the "wave of presence." Thus it "echoed," so to speak, in the silence, this idea which had gone, but which is now inside the great church. Strangely enough I was delighted to be the only one to know that I had had this thought, so ordinary in other respects, but rendered peculiarly majestic, imperial by its resonance.*

Enormous Z's are passing through me (stripes-vibrations-zig-zags?). Then, either broken S's, or what may be their halves, incomplete O's, a little like giant eggshells a child has tried to draw without ever succeeding.

These shapes, like an egg or an S, begin to disturb my thoughts as if they partook of the same nature.

I have once more become a passage, a passage in time. So this, then, was the furrow with the fluid in it, absolutely devoid of viscosity, and that is how I pass from second 51 to second 52, to second 53, then to second 54 and so on. It is my passage forward.

Anesthetized to the world that is in possession of my body, and to everything that only an hour ago was continually filling it, I feel nothing now but the front. I am all prow.

From time to time I encounter a crossroads of irritations, a terrace filled with the insufferable winds of the mind, and I begin to write, almost without knowing, without thinking, intent on the transmission, these words whose significance, great as it is, I fail to recognize: "Too much! Too much! You are giving me too much!"

Stretching of faces

The lines follow each other almost without stopping. Faces slide over them, outlines of faces (usually in profile) are caught in the moving line, are stretched and contorted like the heads of aviators subjected to too much pressure that kneads their cheeks and foreheads like rubber. Much more linear these faces, less terrible, simply grotesque. What becomes disturbing is their size, the size of cliffs, which together with the sinusoidal lines that carry them, it keeps on increasing.

faces in the cliffs

Except for the grotesque faces senselessly laughing (or was it a sign of my situation, which I failed to understand?), nothing.

These are the only ships carried, not *on,* but *inside* these enormous waves.

How huge a thing can be! There is something prodigiously exaggerated about all this though it does not in the least modify the gro-

* *Vanity* of being alone in the presence of such majesty?

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tesque character of the heads, which are even ornamented with silver gray pearls, some with a bluish tinge, and, I must say, delicate in startling contrast to such hyperbolical lines.

For an instant they leave me. A something, I don't know what, descends into a vertiginous gutter. But it doesn't last, and they return, the lines, the lines, the diabolical, dislocating lines.

My head, meanwhile, more and more insensible, like cardboard, I rub with and inside a shawl, rub it mechanically, furiously, the only living zone of my being, all that I have left, my homeland that keeps shrinking more and more.

And the lines, the dislocating lines seem to me more gigantic than ever. I have to force myself not to have recourse to sugar, which is supposed to be an antidote. Nevertheless, almost mechanically, I begin to eat a few sections of orange. For there is something suspect about these lines that are growing, these lines that are becoming cliffs, that keep stretching the faces interminably, though my consciousness of the fact, which I jot down, is still kept at a distance by my notation.

And they are still growing, the lines. I wouldn't know how to draw them even vaguely, the paper is no longer on the same scale. I pause, put down my pencil, push aside the paper, and decide to try something else.

People had told me about visions in crystal balls. (But I must have misunderstood them, thinking that I could transfer the visions in my head to the crystal.) So I picked up the crystal ball, ready beside me. I turned it round and round in my hands, at a loss, I remember, like a child with a new object, not knowing what to do with it or whether it is worth bothering about at all, and ready to put it down. That is what I was about to do, having already held it in three or four different positions and only barely seen my own fingers enlarged by the refraction, when...I WENT UNDER.

The plunge.

The submergence was instantaneous. I closed my eyes to recover my visions but, as I realized, it was no use, it was over. I had cut off that circuit. Lost at an amazing depth, I was no longer moving. Still in this stupor, several seconds elapsed. And, suddenly, the innumerable waves of the mescalinian ocean came pouring over me and knocked me down. Kept knocking me down, knocking me down, knocking me down, knocking me down, knocking me down. It was never going to end,

In the vibration of the wreckage

never. I was alone in the vibration of this wreckage, without periphery, without annex, a man-target without hope of return.

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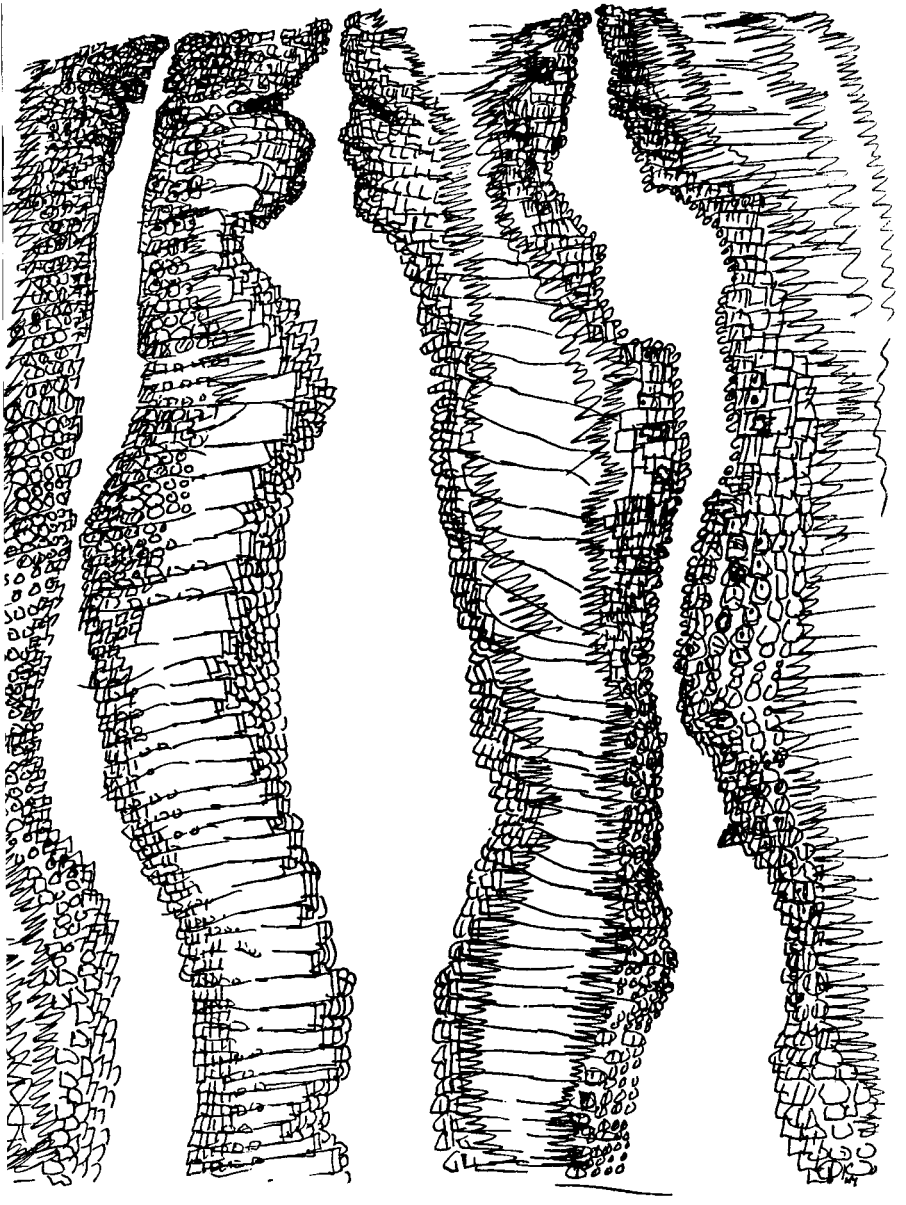

In the drawings on this and the two following pages appear some of the visions of human faces. Above are profiles. Contorted full-faces appear in the next drawing, and, in the third, eyes and other parts of the face.

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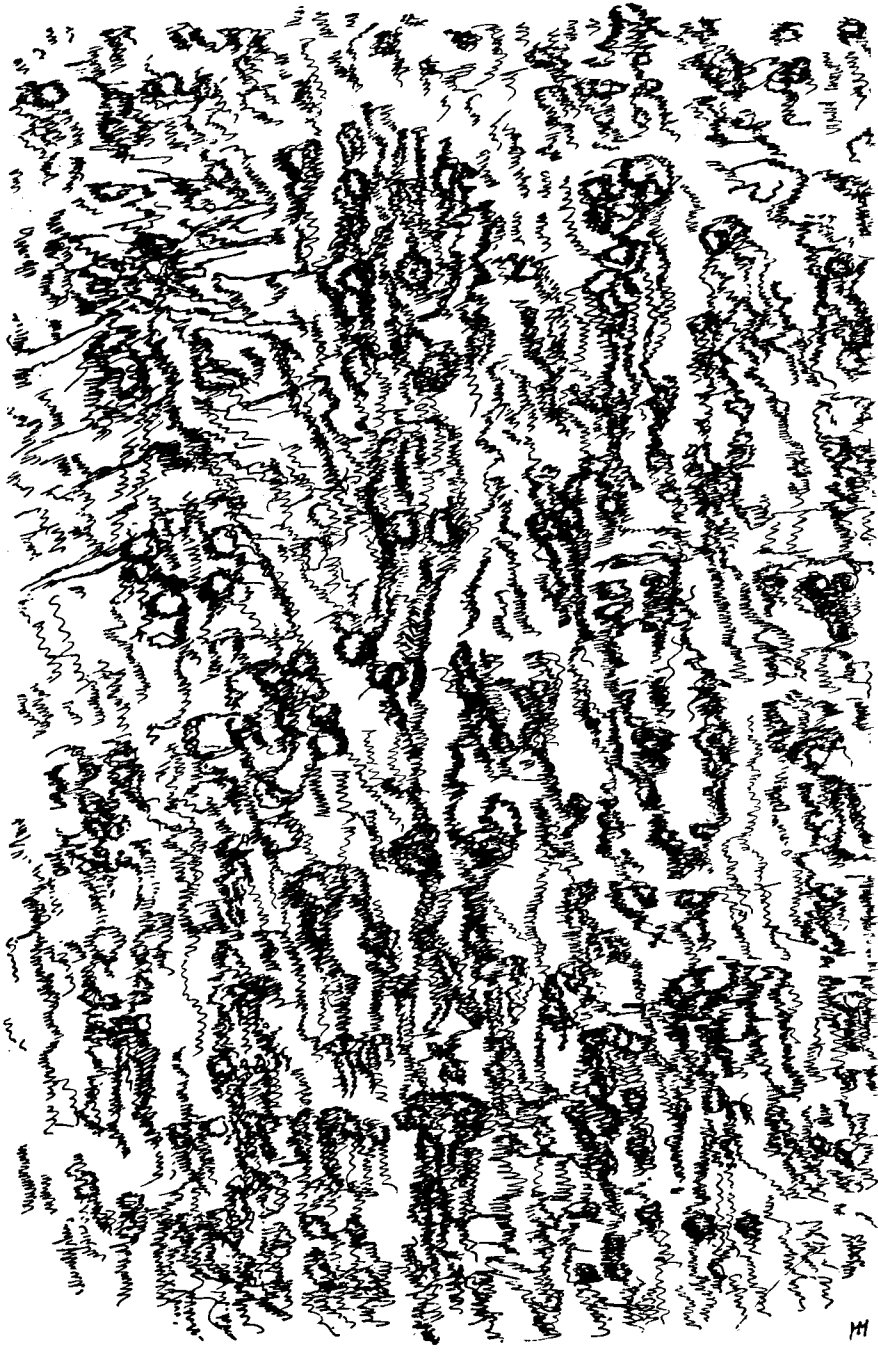

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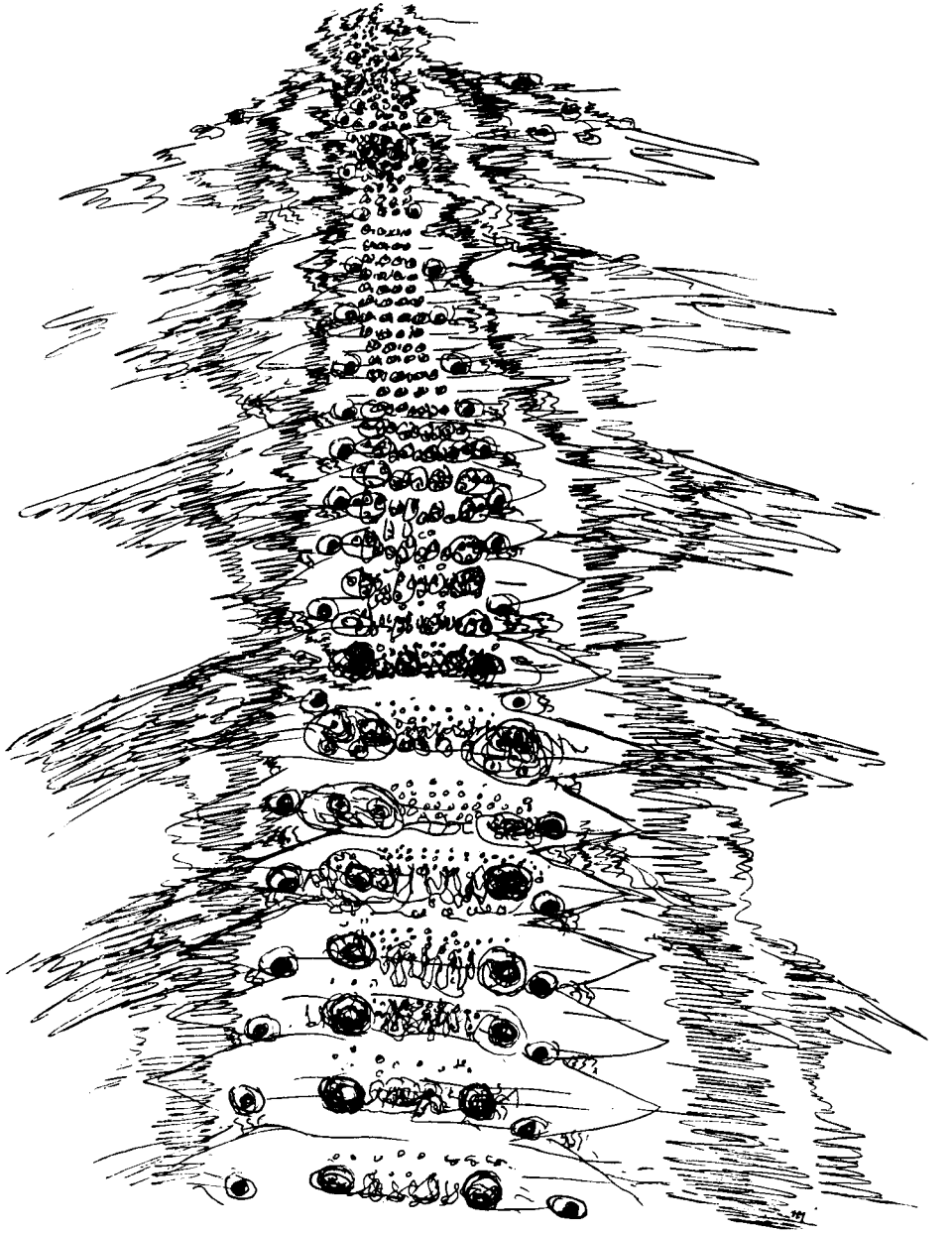

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What had I done? Plunging, I had, I believe, joined myself in my depths and I now coincided* with myself, no longer observer-*voyeur*, but myself reunited with myself—and, with that, instantly the typhoon is upon us.

The crystal ball perhaps only hastened my destruction. I was going to be knocked down anyway. Or was I? I shall never know.

Meanwhile outside objects had to a considerable extent returned to their natural colors. As for the visual excitation, it was as though it had disappeared.** Everything had been restored to order except myself.

How agonizing, agonizing in essence, it was I cannot find words to express, and even trying makes me feel like an imposter.

It was there where one is nothing but oneself, it was there that, with mad speed, hundreds of lines of force combed my being, which could never reintegrate itself quickly enough for, before it could come together again, another line of rakes began raking it, and then again, and then again. (Will it go on all my life now that it has started, now that I am in the path over which *it* passes?)

That which rakes the Soul

In a flash I recalled that strangely dishevelled look peculiar to mad women, dishevelled, not by the wind alone or by their grabbling hands, or by their slovenly habits, but by the imperative inner need of translating, if only in this way, the swift diabolical combing-dishevelling of their whole being, indefinitely martyrized, criss-crossed, wire-drawn.

* *To coincide, what does it mean? In life I try to approach as near to myself as possible (since I want to observe), without letting myself go, without* giving *myself.*

I want to keep a certain margin, which is also like a margin of security.

It may seem excessive that, in order to be myself, a gift on my part should be necessary. It is nevertheless true. A false Narcissus, not walking with myself, not submitting to myself. And I am not the only one. There are any number of others like me. The gift*—they refuse to make the gift.*

To have a religion does not mean to believe in a divinity, as opposed to those who do not believe. It is a gift *one longs, with an irresistible longing, to give to someone infinitely above oneself. In the same way, love does not postulate a perfect woman. It is a gift of oneself, it is a need to make this gift, and any man, even a eunuch, may have this intolerable desire. Narcissism itself is not possible without making this* gift *of oneself to oneself. And curiously enough, for this too one must* believe *(believe in oneself).*

So then, giving up my "casual liaisons, my liaisons of propinquity, of necessity," what I had just done, thanks to the magic of the crystal ball, was to give myself up, to give myself to myself, and, in the very worst moment of my life, to return to my own true truth-homeland-unity, to my first name. The terrible cyclone caught us, me and myself, united so idiotically, so indissolubly, and from that moment, instead of watching them, I received all the blows.

** *In spite of the very pronounced mydriasis which, unchanged, was to last for hours.*

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In the same way, and always at this incessant, inhuman speed, I was beset, pierced by the electric mole boring its way through the essence of the most personal part of myself.

Caught, not by anything human, but in a frenzied mechanical agitator, a kneader-crusher-crumbler, treated like metal in a steelmill, like water in a turbine, like wind in a blower, like a root in an automatic fibre-shredder, like iron in the tireless motion of a milling machine cutting gear teeth. But in my case I was besides forced to look on!

Like a bird in the eddy of the propeller of a four-engine plane, like an ant pinned under the crushing waters of a flood gate, like nothing I can think of, like nobody.

Intense beyond intensity, this struggle, and I active as never before in my life, miraculously surpassing myself, but surpassed out of all proportion by the dislocating phenomenon.

The horror of it was that I was nothing but a line. In normal life one is a sphere, a sphere that surveys panoramas. In no time one is in a castle, one is constantly going from one castle to another, such is the life of even the poorest man who is mentally sound.

When you are only a line

Now only a line. A line that breaks up into a thousand aberrations. The whiplash of an infuriated carter would have been a relief to me. And no pity either. I, this accelerated line I had become, did not retreat, withstood each new slashing, was ready to form again, was on the point of forming again when the force, swifter than a meteor, falling upon it... It was agonizing because I resisted.

What of emotion? I could not even retreat into emotion. The natural diffusion of the emotions that go straight to the heart, making it beat more rapidly or more slowly, as well as to the lungs, changing their respiration, did not take place. This was brought home to me ten days later when at a moving picture theatre, watching a typical movie drama, I felt an emotion "pierce my heart". In my days of horror I had forgotten this path, this comfort.

* * *

To have become a line was a catastrophy, but, even more, it was a surprise, a prodigy. All of me had to pass along this line. And with the most appalling jolts.

The metaphysical taken over by the mechanical

The metaphysical taken over by the mechanical.

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Forced to pass over the same path, myself, my thought, and the vibration.

Myself only a thought, not the thought become myself, or developing in me, but myself *contracted to the thought.*

At the same time came the dislocating vibration which "rejected" the thought and, after a few modulations that were gashes for the thought, eliminated it.

the thoughts mutilated, it was as if I myself had been reduced to microbian proportions.

The thoughts struggled furiously, desperately against their disintegration. But each time they were worsted. It didn't take long. A bacillus under the radiation of radium salt understands this, but a man doesn't. He is protected from it.

How profoundly intimate it was I can never repeat often enough, and how an idea is your center, and how destructable it is, how pliable, how easily disintegrated. No one who has not gone through this can know how easily ideas can be disintegrated.

Yes, an idea can be scourged, can be dissolved. And this they were, endlessly. Destruction quicker by far than myself.

The waves, expert at kneading the thoughts, kept passing incessantly.

The cruelty with which a thought was pounced on is unimaginable. After escaping in shreds several times, no longer recognizable, it would disappear.

current fatal to thought

It was as if, having become a conductor of I don't know what electricity, my mind had just been adopted as a convenient path for currents that were deadly to thought. The thunderbolt and I had to pass together.

Impossible to leave the bed of the terrible phenomenon. There was no path for it to take but right through the center of my Self. Vibrating comb, it was everything, I, practically nothing, without a chance, constantly subjected to the merciless carding.

The thalli of a laminaria, forever agitated by a restless sea, are on vacation compared to me. I was given no vacation, not even for a second.

Terrible beyond all that is terrible! Yet I felt no terror. The soldier under fire has something else to think about. I never stopped struggling. I could not indulge in terror. I didn't have time.

I knew very well that I should not resist as I was doing, first with my whole Self, then with my most cherished ideas. I saw that the

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diabolical motion was jeering, disintegrating, finding me each time more stricken, dispossessed, done for. I should have changed my tactics, let my troops shift for themselves.

The madman is a brave fellow who tries to cope with the destructive phenomenon himself, instead of letting his subaltern functions take over.

But in so critical an hour it is difficult to take in sail. You don't have the five seconds of calm necessary in which to collect yourself.

Stupid ideas, of no importance, would have served just as well, doomed as they were to become the thoughts of a mechanical force and, after being diabolically misused, to disappear. Instead, especially at the beginning, I presented my most trustworthy ideas, the ones on which I could absolutely rely, and in less than no time they were torn apart, severed from their axis and rendered worse than ridiculous, unthinkably rejected, destroyed, null and void. But although I had seen the workings of the mechanism, I persisted in offering the best I had, the most intimate, the most Henri Michaux, so to speak, (and in spite of the advice I was beginning to give myself) like a man whose arm has been caught in a revolving belt and who in spite of himself is drawn toward the center of the machine which in no time will tear him to pieces.

Everything you offer to the mescalinian schizo will be ground to pieces. So never offer yourself. And never offer any vital idea, for what mescaline does to it is horrible.

Offer what is of little importance, mental images, little everyday ideas.

Otherwise you will be wholly uninhabitable, horrifying to yourself, your house in the torrent, an object of ridicule in your own eyes.

* * *

I began eating all the sugar I could swallow. Tablets of plain sugar, or great dessert-spoonfuls in hot drinks. But I only vomited. And *It* continued to make headway against me.

Yet something had to be done. In the midst of the devastation that was driving me mad, and the undulations in which my ideas were going insane—those that passed along the line of my Self, but not those from me to other people (the social circuit of speech was different), I telephoned A. and told him calmly, too calmly: "An overdose. I must have made a mistake. It is hard to stick it any longer. *I should have an antidote.*" My calmness was deceptive. It will be all right, he thinks, the worst is over. Over! It was still to come.

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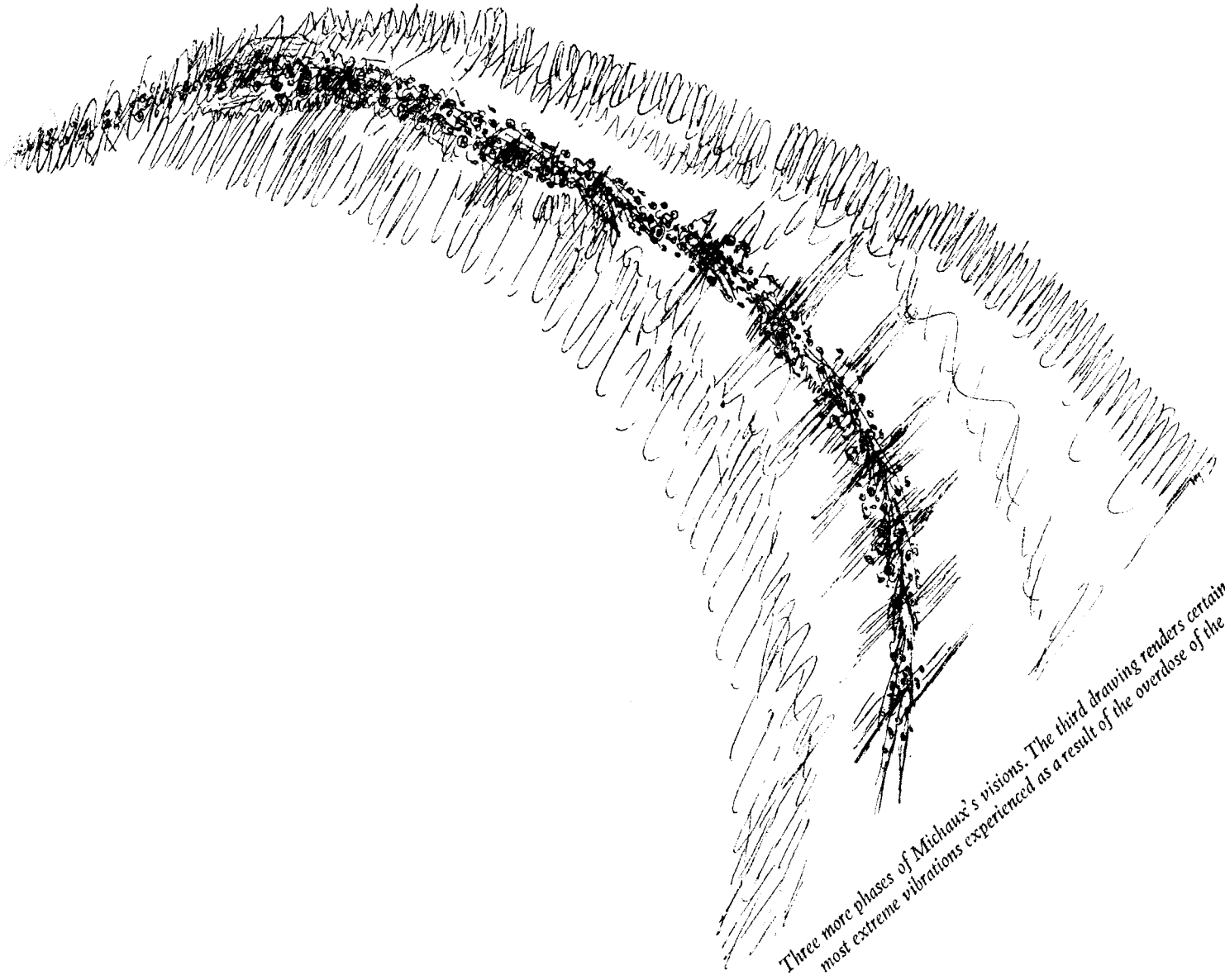

Three more phases of Michaux's visions. The third drawing renders certain of the most extreme vibrations experienced as a result of the overdose of the drug.

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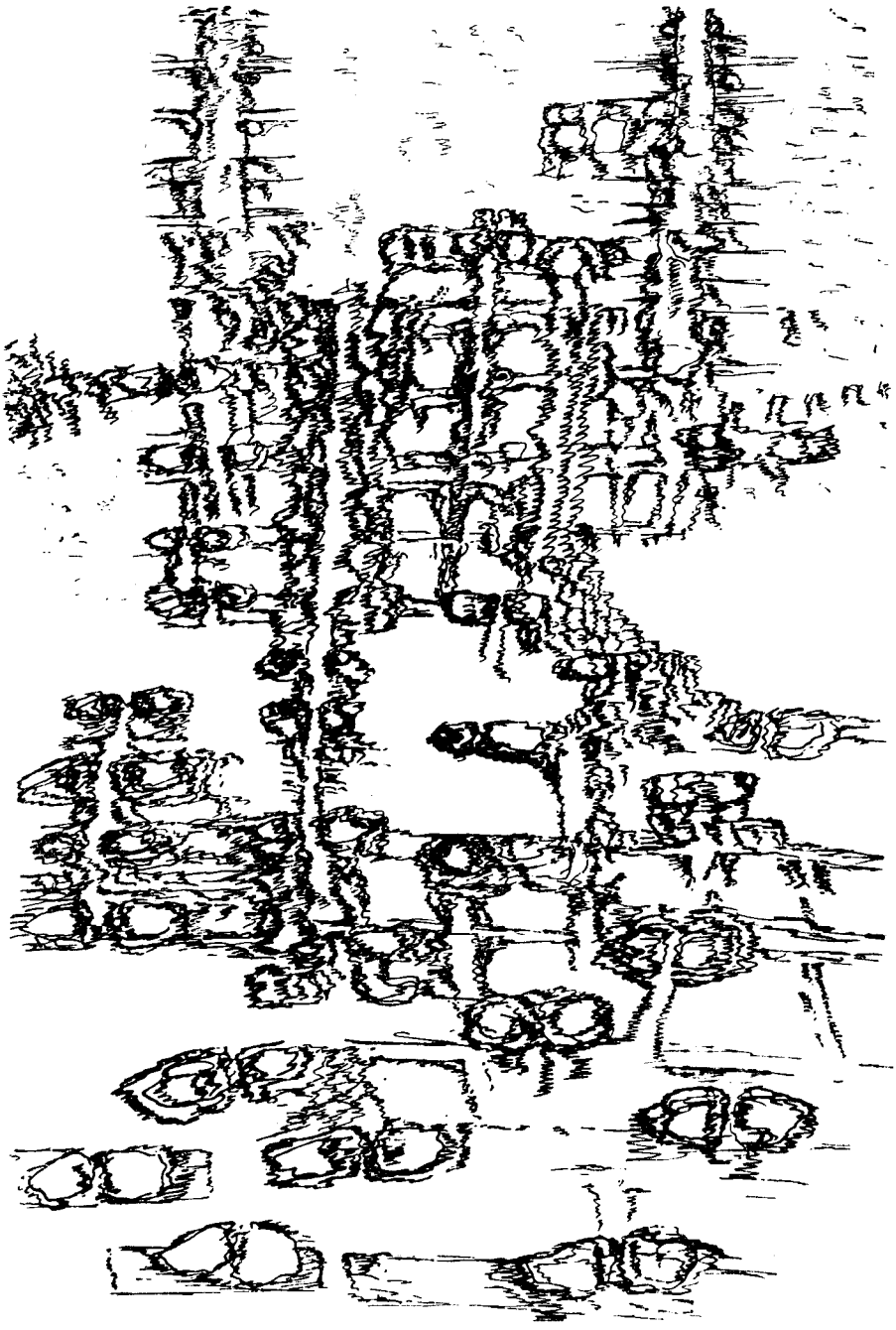

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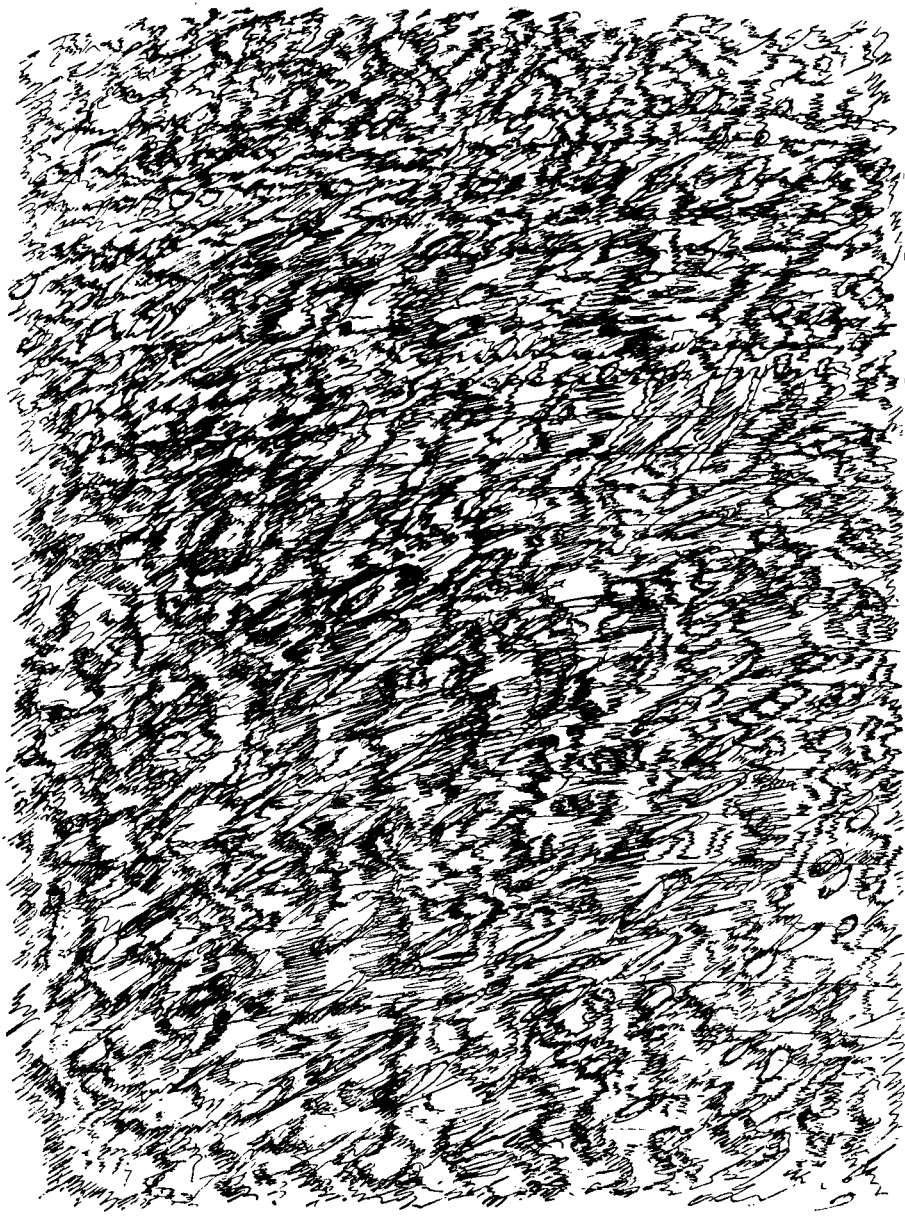

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I see the face of a raving madman

The origin of my calm was very different. To look up the doctor's number, I had turned on more light in the dimly lighted room. The lamp, which was next to a mirror, showed me a face I had never seen before, the face of a raving madman. It would have frightened a murderer. It would have made him retreat. Frantic, completely extroverted, terrifyingly photogenic and determined (whereas I am the opposite) it was the face of one possessed, though neither the face nor I had stirred. It was the mask of a person who no longer listens, the face of a raving madman, who is really a man mad with fear. A wild animal at bay, the face had become vicious. Yet my voice (later verified by those who heard it) was composed, almost gentle, and I felt not the slightest anger or hostility. "It" must have killed already, I thought, for I could not consider this face on the brink of murder as belonging to me. "It must be only a question of minutes now, a very few minutes." That is why I was calm,* the grave calmness of someone who is responsible for a dangerous maniac, for this changed the situation. I could still be gravely affected in another way in these horrors. How vast a man is.

When, at the moment of the intolerable inner trepidations and destructions, the madman will have to express them in corresponding actions, destroying, breaking, burning, wounding, killing someone or killing himself, when, in short, he starts "his work," will I be able to control him until he is taken away or, ridiculous, like an inadequate sphincter, will I be unable to control him? In the latter case, I ought to call for a straight-jacket at once.

That was my problem which had to be solved calmly and sensibly in a moment of rupture and disintegration.

I was so anxious not to attract attention to myself, if possible, not to forfeit by a premature surrender, a cowardly, cautious appeal for help, all that I had left of independence(!) and of life. Drink the cup to the dregs in silence. Drink, I kept saying to give myself courage.

impulses

There were, however, new developments, and they were bad. What had been separated was separated no longer. Two bulkheads had just been inundated. I now

* *Telephoning later when S. was with me, again I spoke calmly as if fearing to alarm the doctor unduly, or myself. I mean the "self" in charge of conduct and organization who, I knew, must not at any cost be affected, become excited. There had to be bulkheads and fortunately they happened automatically, it was my only salvation, one or more parts remaining cool, off the circuit, and practically strangers.*

S. surprised at what I was saying, seized the telephone and quickly rectified: "No, no, it's urgent." But it was too late, the receiver had already been replaced.

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had to struggle with all my might against the preposterous actions which were rushing into my mind, and which I had known, at the sight of the face, were bound to come. But I could never have imagined anything like this. At a mad, an unbelievable speed they were arriving, seizing me and shaking me to make me carry out the action in question, kept shaking me like a rag in the draft of a windmill, then they would disappear. Others would come, would goad me, goad me, all abnormal, avid for realization, not one kind but ten different kinds, not against such and such a person, but against any one, anything, impartial, insatiable and which ten murders and as many fires would not have satisfied, which could not be satisfied. As soon as they appeared I had to try, not to struggle—out of the question—but to put another inoffensive idea in their place. But this idea, after a few quick triturations, would in turn become dangerous (for is there anything in a word which cannot be turned into a dagger? And after that how can one keep from seizing the dagger, how stop it?). Resist them? Absurd. I am they. They are identical with me, and I am more than acquiescent, I am inseparable from them the moment they appear. In madness everything happens because *nothing can be seen in perspective*. An idea passes with you along the one and only path. No panorama. No diversion. No third person. No comparison. No pause (so necessary to judgement).

The idea and you, at breakneck speed. Essential phenomenon of insanity, whose other face is undoubtedly fascination.

Deranged behavior: any chain of thought and imagined actions mechanically, automatically pursuing a course that is the opposite of the usual course.

The perverse impulses had not taken over the motion entirely. I was still being just as terribly mauled by the prodigious vibratory motion. The effects were numerous. M.S. had come to me at my request and had gone into the next room where there was more light so that he could read until I needed him, yet such was the power of the zigzag motive force that not more than five minutes after he had left me I could not be sure whether he was really there, whether he had come or not, or even whether I had asked him to come. For, in the five minutes after he left me, the ample evidence I had had of his presence had been so often shaken, broken, above all interrupted, interruptions of my consciousness, that it was no longer either true or false, past or future, but only a jumble out of which I was unable to extract a single definite fact. Nothing could be *halted.*

impermanence

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Certainty, shaken like a tangible thing, lacerated like flesh, disaffirmed as soon as affirmed, after taking dozens of different and soon contradictory positions (such as: He might have come if I had called him. I can try calling him. After all why shouldn't I have called him? Or I might have sent him away already. Why didn't he want to stay? Or, did I tell him not to stay because I didn't want to bother him? Or, perhaps he couldn't stay any longer? Or was he too busy to come, and tomorrow it will be too late etc... etc...), certainty, varying indefinitely, became in fact negative and inoperative.

Tentatively, just in case he might possibly be near me, I said S. out loud, and, hearing his name, he came into the room, looking embarrassed. I made some sort of remark to hide the humiliating, not the dangerous, truth.

He left me again without protest, and was hardly out of my sight when the revived certainty, a prey to the same assaults, crumbled and tobogganing constantly ceased to be certainty to become subject, theme—a theme with endless constructions-destructions—and nugatory.

No certainty without stability. Certainty comes from permanence. Certainty of a single second means nothing.

ruses of a madman

With S. and later with the doctor, I kept close watch on my words, or rather having said certain words which I thought I should not have spoken—words too liable to rouse their suspicion—I would prepare others, either to avert any possible suspicion on their part, or to test them, trying to discover what they really thought of my extraordinary condition. For they certainly could not have found it ordinary, though they pretended to be calm. The calm, the mass of calm, that calm in great lumps of calm of people mentally sound, is something altogether fantastic and beyond belief. Fluttering with a thousand different motions, you cannot believe that others are without motion and without ideas swarming at the back of their heads. You watch them surreptitiously as you watch your words, in which they could find, if they paid attention, a whole world of things to be used against you. Aren't they really paying any attention then? To put them off the track, you are careful to say nothing that will reveal the exact state you are in, but a different, though similar state, less serious, or in another category. (For, to pretend that you are normal would be impossible and silly.) You use certain ambiguous expressions to make your listener wonder if you are really mad or simply trying to pull his leg.

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Such behavior, so new to me, I observed with surprise as I talked, or rather after I stopped talking. I had learned to cheat.

Significance of fits of absence.
Incessant gusts of wind,
a thousand to the second
a thousand
a thousand
a thousand

Talking to others was creating problems, revealing the full extent of the havoc. Later on, after the doctor, to whom I could explain certain things, had come and had pronounced me out of danger (was he telling the truth?), and was beginning to feel reassured about my condition, several times I ceased to take part in the conversation (as I realized afterwards), being imperiously summoned from within where what was happening was far too serious to let it go bounding on alone. This terrible race within me forced me to close in a hurry the parenthesis of my explanations which, in any case, seemed to me like polite small talk, the kind of thing you say to a society woman who wants you to explain India in three words. The doctor, though extremely intelligent, not being in the same state as myself could not understand all that my words implied. I had to make abridgements. Invent them for him. Veer off from the complex truth. These bridges, which I was forced to build, tired me. I would abandon them before they were finished.

It is intolerable to be in the midst of the superlative of everything.

and you—you go racing on alone

After he had gone, I talked for a while with S.* So I must be recuperating. But I was still not convinced. I was still in the front line and the rumors of imminent peace could not cope as "real presence" with the reality of the furious battles** to which I was being ceaselessly brought back. Besides, one can succumb just before an armistice. It is well known.

My words, still in snatches, were tending, perhaps through naïveté rather then successful ruse, and certainly incompletely, to convince him that I was returning to a semi-normal condition, just when I myself was beginning to perceive the possibility of permanent damage. Wondering if he guessed it too, I tried, not speaking too haltingly I believe, to distract him, to divert his thoughts. It is possible that the doctor had warned him to watch for this and, if necessary, to call a

* *Afterwards, as S. told me, remaining silent for half an hour. Probably due to the fatigue of my first efforts. Then talking with great volubility.*

** *Not so much battles any longer. Going back into myself was more like returning to listen to an invisible orchestra which, without interruption, was giving a prodigious, strange, and disturbing concert whose waves were entirely non-acoustical.*

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psychopathic hospital, although as I told myself, this would be contrary to their characters, unlike their usual attitude. However, if they had been aware of the vortex in which I was struggling, such a step would have been only normal, and still more normal to have had me interned on the spot.

Fits of absence. I have fits of absence with thousands of gray pearls being shaken in me.

During our conversation I again noticed my fits of inattention. When my disorder had been at its height, when I was harboring the thunderbolt, all my attention had been fixed on *It*, on my dangerous interior. Now, for moments at a time I would come back to the exterior, to intercourse with the exterior. More periods of absence also meant more periods of presence.

I divided myself between inside and outside. What was taken from one went to the other. Neither now contained everything. This passage back and forth, this shuttling, gave me a disagreeable sensation of fogginess and tedium, which has left me only a vague recollection. My attention being diverted by the conversation from the diabolic furrow in my center, the hurricane, as though following the direction of my attention was spreading itself, scattering, taking several different paths, was outside as much as inside (less maniacal inside, less stupendous than before) and was in more than one respect like a hurricane you might watch on shipboard without going out on deck, following it from various signs, bottles rolling around or the flapping of a carelessly fastened tarpaulin that is lashed by the wind, which augments in fury or finally diminishes while the ship is still painfully tossed about.

The mescalinian hurricane (from the very beginning in fact) seemed to be concentrated on the same points on which my attention was concentrated.—The images first.—The ideas —my Self. And when I am dispersed it is dispersed with me.

The doctor returned in the evening and, after questioning me with the most friendly interest, left without further examination and apparently reassured. I still felt doubtful, but my doubts seemed absurd.

I went to bed, the first night began, the first of the nights unlike the others. What I had mistaken for calm was, I found as soon as I got to bed, a slight, slight agitation, so slight that I wasn't even sure, though I could not suppress it. And it was right in my center, only there, a nasty little disturbance, hardly anything, not at all unruly, but which could upset everything, and which had been masked by the spectacular violence of the day's storms. The mescalinian excitation was gone. What next?

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Now I had plenty of cause to be desperate. I was still mad, and for no reason...

Mad ideas

Masses of mad ideas, no, a *procession* of mad ideas, for they always came one by one, presented themselves, and it occurred to me—without my knowing that it was what Jaspers had said on the subject—that "for the madman to have only one mania is already a sort of relief." He knows what to expect. I would have been hard put to know what to expect. I was at the swarming, the polivalent stage. I might do a thousand insane things, cut my finger, break the window, set fire to the chairs, open my veins with a razor, smash the mirrors. The contrary of normal action* was what seemed tempting. Any object, when an idea for dramatizing life gets hold of it, is capable of anything. I was afraid to go to sleep. I was afraid to let myself go. I was afraid to turn out the light, knowing that in the dark my thoughts would be without opposition.

Toward three o'clock in the morning there were a few visions again. Forms like needles, like the branches of compasses, very close together, at very acute angles, and, as I remember, moving at a moderate speed. Their color: pale violet. The visions would now be coming back perhaps. Leaving my dangerous center I would return to what is called the visual cortex. False hope. I had to keep a close watch on myself—undistracted.

I tried in vain to attract my body. It certainly needed to be sensualized. But it had become a stranger, took no interest in anything.

Trying to rouse it, I began reading passages from new books and from others whose effect on me I knew, books of every sort, poetic, epic, mystic, sentimental, heroic, erotic, Chinese, Hindu, Hebrew. Nothing. I might just as well have picked up bricks as books. Vainly I tried to make a muff for myself. Agreeable sensations, that was what I needed, or emotions. The only real shield against madness—the soft shield of *pleasure*.

to feel, to have an impression is to settle down. Mescaline forbids settling anywhere

Sleep! I implored, "Today, this night of all nights, sleep, come to me if you can. Come and assuage the exhaustion of a wretch who has been buffeted by all the winds of heaven. Sleep, will you never again find your plains in me? Sleep, after this

* *In madmen the fascination of the abberant idea, the fascination of the thing that should not be done, operates by virtue of the same laws that govern expression and the work of art in general. An oppressive uneasiness in the mind, whose cause they cannot perceive, at cross-purposes, parasitic, in a state of constant suspense, will reappear through a sort of affinity in the devious ideas and acts that violate normal behavior.*

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terrible day..." and I kept imploring. But sleep did not come. Besides, in spite of all my solicitations, all my coaxing, I was really on my guard against it. Yet I had not altogether wasted my time by talking to it so absurdly, absurdly but in a way that was, I am sure, for me necessary. Indeed, in this long detour my whole being relaxed. Suddenly the touch of my steamer rug seemed soft and warm to the palm of my hand which sent the news all through my body, soothing it a little.

Saved? Was I saved? It was probably only a beginning. But it was marvelous: my body was coming back to me. I was going to stop being mad. It was my body that would be the stabilizer. It knows all the pleasures, all the antagonistic sensations.

Morning came at last, the dawn. I must have dozed off. The various landmarks which were reappearing with the nascent light were signs of the renascence of reality. They still had very little density, but that little I appreciated as a connoisseur with "recognition" in every sense of the word.

They indicated that my body, taking pleasure in its senses, was going to get back its voice. It would no longer be so quickly overthrown.

"You see, the fallen leaves are returning to the tree..." I said to myself. For, having become a stranger, alienated from myself. I could talk to myself as if I were some one else."

(Translated by Louise Varèse)

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THE WORLD IS WHITE

The world is white, twig tracked by wrens,
supposed color of innocence,
swanned with snow on hedge and fence.

Chesslike figures, black nuns go
to feed the blackbirds in the snow;
on crystal branches an ebony crow

watches as in the poem by Poe.
Ivory piano keys of snow
pound on the mind, adagio:

a second movement slow and sad,
D minor speared and leaking blood
along an alabaster side

it seems to nuns. When they turn
tolled through snow toward orison
that subtle fast beaked bird flies down.

—HAROLD WITT

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AN AESTHETIC OF IMITATION

Preferring 'resemblance to beauty,'
There were some who found more
Truth in Philoktetes' rotten legs
Than in the smooth buttocks
Of a hundred Venuses. There
Is something in certain events that
Drives one to repetition. The act
Is all; one says, This thing,
'Craftsmen, beggers, topers with rags,'
This thing.

With cheeks of silver,
Silanion inlaid the pallor of Iokaste.
Not life, rather this thing, which bangs
Silver into the real. Not there, rather
Before, or beside: 'the morning
After the taking of Troy, Odysseus
After slaying the suitors.'

Brother,
Nothing is real that has happened
Only once; and nothing can happen
Again, and still be true. One sings,
Not what was, but *that* it was;
What was true in flesh, is
Merely beautiful in silver.

—DONALD FINKEL

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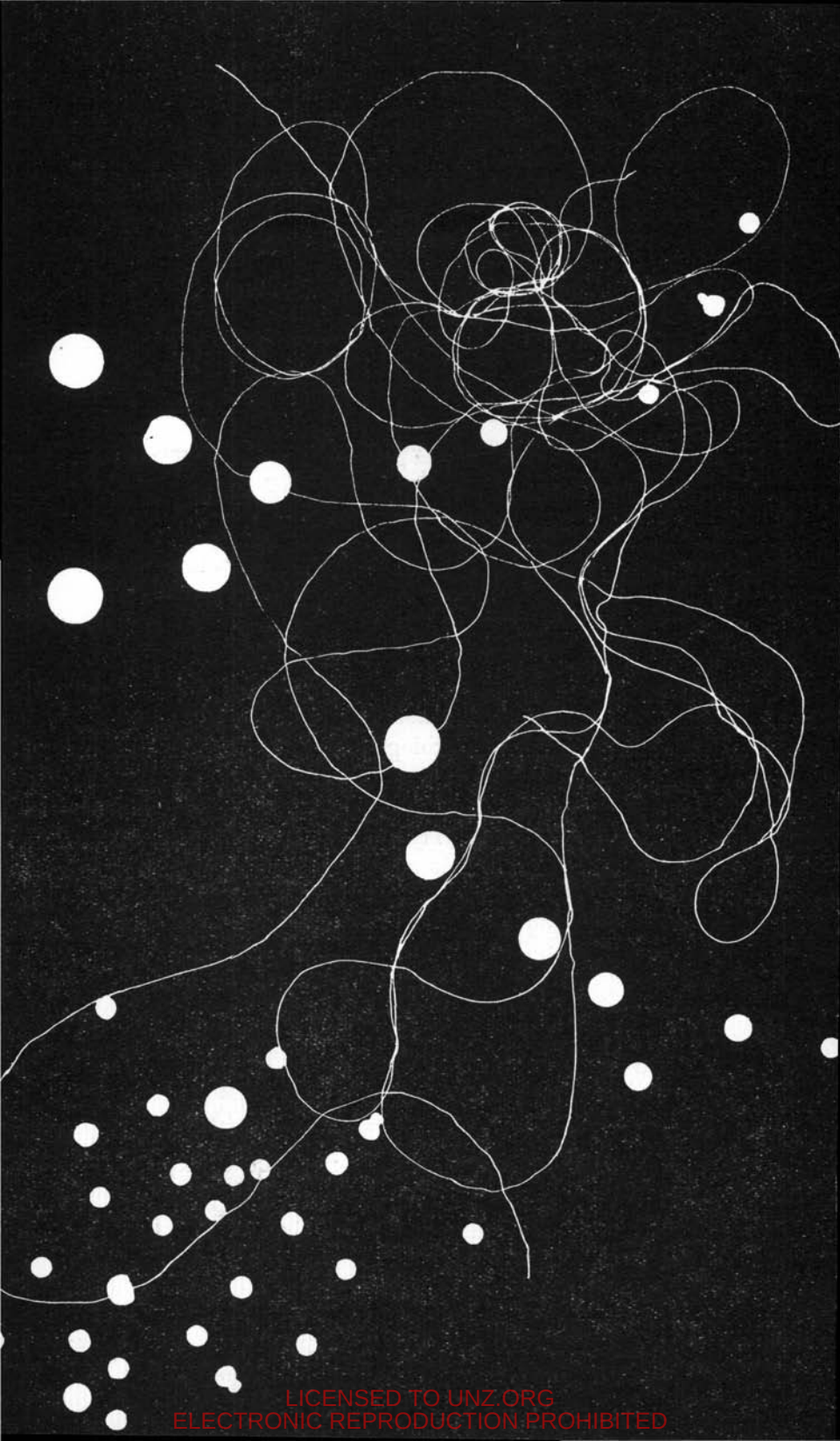

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TERRY SOUTHERN

South's Summer Idyll

A summer Saturday in Dallas and the boy Howard sat out on the back steps, knees up, propping in between, an old singleload, twelve-gauge shotgun. While he steadied and squeezed the butt in one hand, the other, with studied unbroken slowness, wrapped a long piece of friction tape around and around the stock—for beginning at the toe of the butt and stretching up about five inches was a thin dry crack in the old wood.

His mother came out, down off the back porch carrying an enamelled basin heaped with twists of wet, wrung clothes.

"You wantta be careful with that old gun," she said, making a slight frown.

A squat woman and dark-haired, almost eastern in the intensity she tried to bear on situations, her face was perhaps too open, eyes too widely spaced, and the effect was ever what she calculated. She would not suspect, however, that within the block only a few could take her seriously.

Her boy Howard did, of course, though if others were present he might be embarrassed, or a little irritated.

"Aw now you're kiddin'," he said, wanting mainly to reassure her about the gun.

She had just given him a dollar for the week-end, and before dark he would have spent over half of it. Sitting now on the back steps he could reckon exactly how it would go. And with her standing there talking, he was aware, too, that except for the show she had no idea at all how he would spend the money.

At the kitchen table his father treated it lightly.

—Drawing by Bernard Pfriem

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"Where you *goin'* boy? Shootin'?"

"Aw just fool aroun'," said Howard, looking away, eating slowly at a piece of bread, buttered and covered with sugar.

"Who, you and Lawrence? What're y'all goin' *after*?"

"Aw I dunno," said Howard, "just fool aroun', I guess."

"Where're you and Lawrence *goin'*, Howie?" asked his mother, back at the sink again.

"Aw out aroun' Hampton Airport, I guess," he said.

"You wantta be careful out there at Hampton," said his mother, "with the planes comin' in and all."

Howard tried to laugh, even to catch his father's eye.

"They ain't any *planes* there now," he said, sheepish at having to be impatient with her, "they closed it down, didn't you know that?"

"I don't want you goin' up in that trainer-plane either," his mother went on as unhearing, almost closed-eyed, packing faded dripless lumps of cloth into the basin.

"Aw now you're kiddin'," said Howard, "it don't cost but three dollars for fifteen minutes. Not likely I *will*, is it?"

At the table, though, his father spoke about the gun, the danger, abstractly, as if he himself had never fired it. And yet, when he saw the box of shells on the table, he opened it and shook two or three out, holding them loosely, so as to appear casual, familiar, he who had not held a gun in thirty years.

"Look like good'uns," he said finally, "what'd they cost?"

Howard reached Big Lawrence's house by way of the alley. Stepping through an open place in the fence two houses before, and cutting across these back yards, he could hear Lawrence on at the house and he saw his shadow dark there behind a window screen.

"Ka-*pow!* Ka-*pow!* Ka-*pow!*" was what Lawrence said.

It was a small room.

Big Lawrence sat out on the edge of the bed, and all down around his feet the scattered white patches lay, fallen each as the poison cactus-bloom, every other center oil-dark, he cleaning his rifle, a 30–30 Savage.

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Across one end of the bed, flat on his stomach looking at an old comic book, was Crazy Ralph Newgate, while Tommy Sellers sat on the floor, back flat to the wall. Tommy Sellers had a baseball and glove in his lap, and every so often he would flip the baseball up and it would twirl over his fingers like an electric top.

As Howard came in and sat down on the arm of a heavy-stuffed, misshapen chair, Lawrence looked up, laughing. Most of the time Lawrence's laugh was coarse and, in a way, sort of bitter.

"Well, goddam if it ain't old Howard!" he said, perhaps remembering a western movie they had seen the night before.

Somewhere, next door, a radio was playing loud, Saturday morning cowboy music from Station WRR in downtown Dallas.

Big Lawrence put the bolt back in, slapping it.

"You ready?" he asked Howard, and Howard nodded—but before he could get up, Lawrence had turned around on the bed and leaned hard across Ralph Newgate's legs, sighting the rifle out over the back yard. There across the yard, out about three feet from the back fence, so crouched half-sitting that the feet were drawn way under, was a cat—a black cat, rounded small and unblinking in the high morning sun.

Big Lawrence squeezed one out on the empty chamber.

"Ka-*pow!*" he said and brought the gun down, laughing.

On the floor, next to the wall, the baseball spun twisting across Tommy Sellers knuckles like a trained rat.

"Goddam! Right in the eye!" said Lawrence. He raised up, and with some shells from his shirt pocket loaded the rifle; then he quickly threw out the shells, working the bolt in a jerky eccentric motion. One of the shells, as they flew all over the bed, went across the comic book Ralph Newgate was holding and hit the bridge of his nose. The other three boys laughed, but Crazy Ralph muttered something, rubbing his nose, and flipped the shell back over into the rest next to Lawrence's leg, as he might have playing marbles—and Big Lawrence flinched.

"You crazy bastard!" said Lawrence, "what if it'd hit the

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cap!" and he picked up the shell and threw it as hard as he could against the wall behind Ralph Newgate's head, making him duck. They left the shell where it fell on the floor behind the bed. Ralph didn't speak, but just kept turning the pages of the comic book, while Lawrence sat there looking at the book that was held in front of Ralph Newgate's eyes for about a minute.

Lawrence reloaded the gun and drew another bead out the window. The black cat was still sitting there, head on toward the muzzle when Lawrence moved the safety with his thumb, and next door someone turned the radio up a little more.

In the small room, the explosion was loud.

The comic book jumped in Crazy Ralph's hand like it was jerked by a wire. "God*dam* it!" he said, but he didn't look around, just shifted a little, as in settling to the book again.

The cat hardly moved. It seemed only to have been pushed back toward the fence some, still sitting there, head down, feet drawn under, staring at the screen.

But in the screen now, next to a hole made in opening the screen from the outside, was another, perfectly round, flanged out instead of in, worn suddenly, by the passing of the bullet, all bright silver at the edge.

Big Lawrence and Howard walked a dirt road along one side of Hampton Airport. It was a hot, dry day.

"What's a box of shells like that cost?" Lawrence asked, and when Howard told, Lawrence said, "*Sure*, but for how many shells?"

At crossroads, the corner of a field, a place where on some Sundays certain people who made model airplanes came to try them, they found, all taped together, five or six shiny old dry-cell batteries as might be used for starting just such small engines.

Howard pulled these batteries apart while they walked on, slower now beneath the terrible sun, and when Lawrence wanted to see if he could hit one in the air with the shotgun, they agreed to trade off, three rifle-cartridges for one shotgunshell.

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Howard pitched one of the batteries up, but Lawrence wasn't ready. "Wait'll I say '*Pull*'," he told Howard.

He stood to one side then, holding the shotgun down as he might have seen done in a newsreel about skeet-shooting.

"Okay, now *Pull!*"

Lawrence missed the first one, said that Howard was throwing too hard.

Howard tossed another, gently, lobbing it into the sun, glinting end over gleaming end, a small meteor in slow motion, suddenly jumping with the explosion, this same silver thing, as caught up in a hot air jet, but with the explosion, coughing out its black insides.

"Got the sonofabitch," said Big Lawrence. "Dead bird goddam it!"

Howard laughed. "I reckon it is," he said softly.

Once across the field, away from the airport, they turned up the railroad track. And now they walked very slow, straight into the sun, burning, mirrored a high blinding silver in the rails that lay for five miles unbending, flat against the shapeless waste, ascending, stretching ablaze to the sun itself—so that seen from afar, as quite small, they could have appeared, as children, to walk unending between these two columns of dancing light.

With the rifle they took some long shots at the dead-glass discs on a signal tower far up the track, but nothing happened. When they were closer though, one of the signals suddenly swung up wildly alight. A burning color. Lawrence was about to take a shot at it when they heard the train behind them.

They slid down an embankment, through the bull-nettle and bluebonnets, to walk a path along the bottom. When the freight train reached them however, they turned to watch it go by, and at one of the boxcars, Big Lawrence, holding the rifle against his hip, pumped three or four rounds into the side of it. Under the noise of the train, the muted shots had no connection with the bursting way the dark wood on the boxcar door tore off angling and splintered out all pine white.

As they walked on, Howard said, "Don't reckon anybody was *in* it do you?" Then he and Lawrence laughed.

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They struck the creek hollow and followed it in file, Lawrence ahead, stepping around tall slakey rocks that pitched up abruptly from the hot shale. Heat came out of this dry stone, sharp as acid, wavering up in black lines. Then at a bend before them was the water hole, small now and stagnant, and they turned off to climb the bank in order to reach it from the side. Howard was in front now, as they came over the rise, he saw the rabbit first. Standing between two oak stumps ten feet away, standing up like a kangaroo, ears winced back, looking away, toward the railroad track. Then Lawrence saw it too, and tried to motion Howard off with one hand, bringing his rifle up quick with the other.

The sound came as one, but within one spurting circle of explosion, the two explosions were distinct.

On their side, the half face of the rabbit twitched twice back and down even before it hit him, then he jumped straight up in a double flip five times the height he had stood and landed across one of the old burned out stumps like a roll of wet paper.

"*Goddam!*" said Lawrence, frowning. He walked slowly toward the stumps, then looked at Howard before he picked up the rabbit. "God*dam* it!" he said.

One side of the rabbit, from the stomach down, looked as though it had been pushed through a meat grinder.

"You must be crazy," Lawrence said, "why didn't you let me get him, goddam it, I could of gotten him in the head." He dropped the rabbit across the stump again, and stood looking at it.

Howard picked up the rabbit, studied it. "Sure tore hell out of it, didn't it?" he said.

Lawrence spat and turned away. Howard watched him for a minute walking down toward the water hole, then he put the rabbit back on the stump and followed.

They leaned the guns against the dead grassed ground that rose at their backs, and sat down. Howard got out the cigarettes and offered them, so that Lawrence took one first, and then Howard. And Howard struck the match.

"Got the car tonight?" he asked, holding out the light.

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Big Lawrence didn't answer at once for drawing on the cigarette. "Sure," he said then, admitting, "but I've got a date." In this sun, the flame of the match was colorless, only chemical, without heat.

"Where you goin'?" Howard asked, "to the show?"

"I dunno," said Lawrence, watching the smoke, "maybe I will."

The water hole was small, less then ten feet across, overhung only by a dwarfed sand-willow on the other bank, so that all around the dead burning ground was flushed with the sun, while one half of the hole itself cast back the scene in distortion.

Over and on the water though, in and through the shadow that fell half across them, played wasps and water-spiders, dragonflies, snake-doctors, and a thousand gray gnats. A hornet, deep-ribbed, whirring golden bright as a spinning dollar, hung in a hummingbird twist just on the water surface in the deepest shadow of the tree, and Howard threw a rock at it.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. The hornet, rising frantically up through the willow branches, twisted once, and came down out of the tree in a wild whining loop, and lit exactly on the back of Howard's shirt collar, and then very deliberately, as Lawrence saw, crawled inside.

"Hold still," said Lawrence, taking a handfull of the shirt at the back and the hornet with it, holding it.

Howard had his throat arched out, the back of his neck all scrutched away from the shirt collar. "Did you get it?" he kept asking.

"Hold still, goddam it," said Lawrence, laughing, watching Howard's face from the side, finally closing his hand on the shirt, making the hornet crackle as hard and dry as an old match box when he clenched his fist.

And then Lawrence had it out, in his hand, and they were both bent over in looking. It was dead now, wadded and broken, and in the shade of his hand, the gold of the hornet had become as ugly-colored as the phosphorus dial at noon. It was the stinger, sticking out like a wire hair, taut in an electric quaver, that still lived.

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"Look at that goddam thing," said Lawrence of the stinger, and made as if to touch it with his finger.

"Be careful, you'll get stung," said Howard.

"*Look* at it," said Lawrence, intent.

"They all do that," Howard said.

"Sure, but not like that."

Lawrence touched it with his finger, but nothing happened.

"Maybe we can get it to sting something," said Howard, and he tried to catch a doodle-bug, crawling on a bluebonnet that grew alone between them, but he missed it. So Lawrence bent the flower itself over, to get the stinger to penetrate the stem at the bottom. "It'll kill it," he said, "it's acid."

Lawrence held the tail of the hornet tight between his thumb and finger, squeezing to get more of the stinger out, until it came out too far and stopped moving—and Lawrence, squeezing, slowly emptied the body of its white filling. Some of it went on his finger. Lawrence smelled it, then he let Howard smell it before he wiped his finger on the grass.

They lit another cigarette. Big Lawrence threw the match in the water, and a minute after if had floated out, took up the 30–30, drew a bead, and clipped it just below the burnt head.

"*Why?*" he asked Howard, handing him the rifle, "are you goin' to the show tonight?"

"I might," Howard said.

"No, but have you got a date?"

"I guess I could get one," said Howard, working the bolt.

"I've got one with Helen Ward," said Lawrence.

Howard sighted along the rifle.

"You know her *sister?*" Lawrence asked.

"Who, Louise?"

"Sure, maybe we could get 'em drunk."

Howard held his breath, steadying the rifle. Then he took a shot. "Sure I know her," he said.

They shot water targets, mostly with the rifle, Howard using the shots Lawrence owed him. Once, however, after he dug an old condensed-milk can out of the bank and sat it on the water, Lawrence took up the shotgun and held the muzzle about a foot from the can.

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"H-Bomb," he said, pulling the trigger.

They sat there for an hour, talking a little and smoking, shooting at crawfish and dragonflies, or underwater rocks that shone through flat yellow, or more often, dull dead brown.

Then they decided to go back to the house and drink some beer.

Near the stumps, Howard crossed over and picked up the rabbit, Lawrence watching him.

"What're you goin' to do with that damn thing?" Lawrence asked.

"Aw I dunno," said Howard, "might as well take it along."

Lawrence watched while Howard held it by the ears and kicked at a piece of newspaper, twisted dry and dirty, yellow in the grass. He got the paper, shook it out straight, and he wrapped it around the rabbit.

They started across the field, Lawrence not talking for a while. Then he stopped to light a cigarette.

"I know what," he said, cradling the 30–30 to one arm, "we can cook it."

Howard didn't answer right off, but once, as they walked back toward the stumps, he looked at the sun.

"I wonder what time it is anyhow," he said.

Using Howard's knife, Big Lawrence, once it was decided, sat on one of the stumps to skin the rabbit while Howard went pushing around through the Johnson grass, folding aside with his feet, peering and picking, bundling back, to build the fire.

At the stumps, Lawrence cursed the knife, tried the other blade, and sawed at the rabbit's neck, twisting it in his hand.

"Wouldn't cut hot niggerpiss," he said, but somehow he managed to get the head off, and to turn the skin back on itself at the neck, so that he pulled it down like a glove reversed on an unborn hand, it glistened so.

He had to stop with the skin halfway down to cut off the front feet, and in doing this, hacking once straight on from the point of the blade, the blade suddenly folded back against his finger. He opened the knife slowly, saying nothing, but he sucked at the finger and squeezed it between two others

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until, through all this heavy red of rabbit, sticking, covering his whole hand now, he could almost see, but never quite, where in one spot on his smallest finger, he himself, up through the blood of the rabbits, was bleeding too.

He went down to the pool to clean his hands, but he finished skinning the rabbit first.

When he got back, Howard was down, ready to light the fire.

"Are we goin' to the show or not?" Lawrence said.

"I don't care," said Howard, staring up at him, "do *you* want to?"

"Well, we better get back if we're goin'."

Howard got the old newspaper from where he had put it to burn and wrapped it around the rabbit again, and he put this inside his shirt. He folded the skin square and put it in his pocket.

Lawrence had the rabbit's head. He tried to get the eyes to stay open, and one did stay open, but only the white showed when he sat it on the stump. He took a brick from the windbreak Howard had built for the fire and put this on the stump too, behind the head, and they started across the field. When they were a little way out, they took shots at the head, and finally Lawrence used the last of the shells he had coming to go up close and shoot the head, brick, and even part of the stump away with the old twelve-gauge.

Before they reached Rosemont Street they could hear Tommy Sellers cursing and Crazy Ralph Newgate farther, yelling, "*All the way! All the way!*" and as they turned in, Tommy Sellers was there, coming toward them, walking up the middle of the street, swinging his glove by one finger.

Howard pulled the wad of newspaper out of his shirt and held it up to show, and Tommy Sellers stopped and kicked around at some dead grass piled in the gutter. "*Okay, all the way!*" Ralph Newgate was yelling halfway down the block, and Tommy Sellers found the ball with his foot. Then, bending over, in a low twisting windup from the gutter, never once looking where, he threw it—the ball that lifted like a

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shot to hang sailing for an instant in a wide climbing arc.

Big Lawrence brought the rifle off his shoulder. "Ka-*pow!*" he said, "Ka-*pow!*" and the barrel-point wavered, sighting up the lazy wake of the ball. "Dead sonofabitch bird," he said.

Tommy Sellers was standing close, hands on his hips, not seeing down there an eighth of a mile where Ralph Newgate, with his eyes high, nervously tapping the glove palm, was trying to pick the bouncing throw off the headlight of a parked car.

"God it stinks," said Lawrence, making a face when Howard opened the newspaper. The paper now was like a half dried cloth, stiff, or sticking in places and coming to pieces. Almost at once a fly was crawling over the chewed up part of the rabbit.

"You know what it's like?" said Lawrence—"*goddam rotten afterbirth!*" and he spat, seeming to retch a little.

"What was it?" asked Tommy Sellers, looking close at the rabbit, then up, away, not caring in dancing out to take the wild looping throw from Ralph Newgate.

They walked on. Howard wrapped the newspaper around the rabbit again and put it in his shirt.

"It's already beginning to rot," said Big Lawrence.

"Aw you're crazy," Howard said.

"*Crazy*," repeated Lawrence, "you're the one who's crazy. What'll you do, *eat it?*" He laughed, angrily, spitting again.

They were walking in the street in front of Lawrence's house now. Tommy Sellers and Ralph Newgate were at the curb, throwing their gloves up through the branches of a cedar tree where the ball was caught.

There were some people standing around the steps at Lawrence's front porch. One was a youngish woman wearing an apron over her dress—and a little girl was holding on to the dress with both hands, pressing her face into the apron, swinging herself slowly back and forth, so that the woman stood as braced, her feet slightly apart. She stroked the child's head with one hand, and in the other she was holding the dead cat.

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They watched Howard and Lawrence in the street in front of the house. Once the woman moved her head and spoke to the fat man standing on the porch who frowned without looking at her.

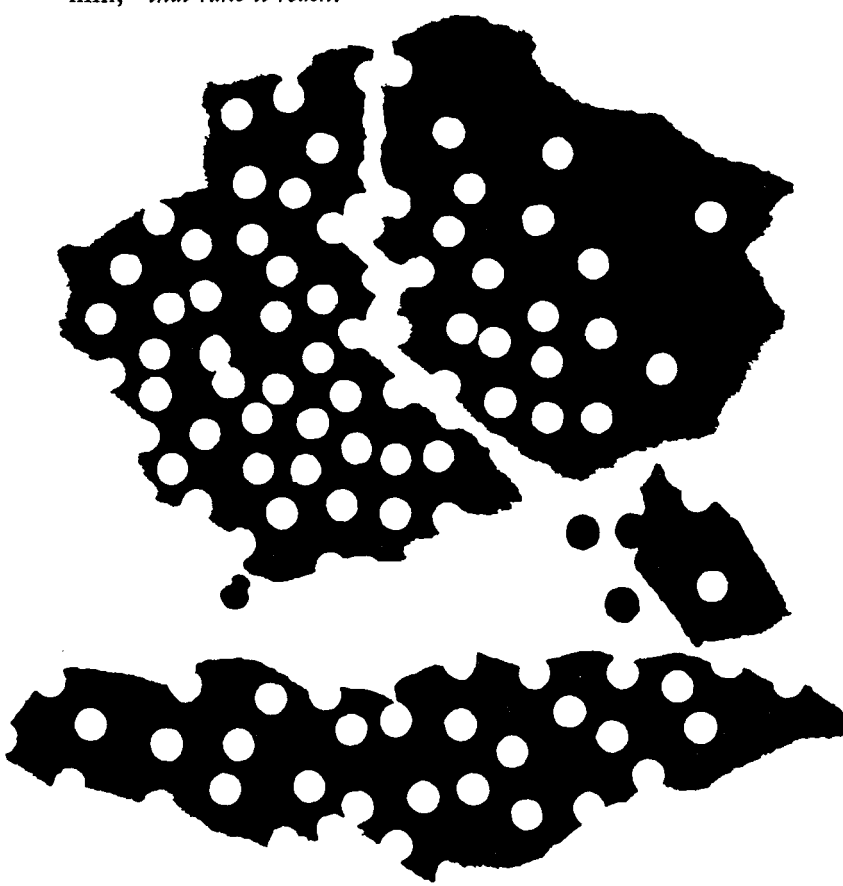
Howard didn't turn in with Lawrence. "See you at the show," he said.

As he walked on, the fall of their voices died past him.

"How'd it happen, son," he heard Lawrence's dad ask.

He turned off on a vacant lot that cut through toward his house. Halfway across, he pulled out the paper and opened it. He studied it, brought it up to his face and smelled it.

"*That rake'll reach!*" Crazy Ralph was yelling way behind him, "*that rake'll reach!*"



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ON THE LAST VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

I

Perhaps by the time I have written this
the last three or four will also be gone:
not many people will mark a few less

old men who live only as candle flame
dropped until the short time when it consumes
itself already consumed, and will burn

remembrance of its burning. By these names,
however, some, as I, the unready,
the ones who touch beginnings, returns, times,

symmetries, as commemorations, stay
our countless anniversaries of change
past their still unaccustomed frequency;

we will hold ourselves to each last naming.
By such we are inescapably caught,
our own fearful totems, not just to bring

shoring against the sensed precipitate,
increasing even now in fingers' ends,
through the blood, of living, but to indict

someone, any other, as sharer, found,
by saying I know, me too, here am I
who will soon have thirty years unexplained,

unrevealed, unrevealing, know'st thou me?
But what final understanding may grow
from each passing, only the two or three

(the flame burning its consumed self) will know.

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II

"The land doesn't change. There is still the land."
Perhaps, but what we know of permanence
admits little actually determined

by eye, or by touch, of any advance
of ice, decay of ridge, any shifting
of rivers, to certify there is 'since'

and 'will be' conjugated past waiting
in our terms. A child may reach clarity
in this, returning to a place, saying,

"The old tree is gone." We tend to look by
the individual vegetation;
standing where battle was of a past day

we see trees where trees once received mention
and assume congruency, forgetting
that the particular oak which was *then*

preserved some Reb or Yank by arresting
ball or splinter. We compound fallacy
to presume scene engenders man's acting,

predetermines more than the strategy
to turn a flank or assault the center,
at the same time that we say, "This may be,

this land, as it was then, nothing will blur
our reliving, imagined, what has passed."
'Here' is never 'then.' 'Then' is the moulder

of those faces, those bones, leached now to dust.

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III

When they have gone, there will be no reason
for what they had done. Their rememberings,
isolated violences, frozen

as scenes illuminated by lightning,
all motion static, colors out of true,
faded by remembering, as fading

has now altered shadow's and light's value
in Brady's daguerreotypes, will have gone,
and these final realities, held through

years to my time, of that war, will become
remembered stories, chronicles set down
to read. Pity not these men, for what name

would you give to living for any man
that confers permanence, or that may rule
more ennobling than living may have been?

What has no nobility; after a while
there is no surprise at each variance
of dying's manner, each new visible

rending or corruption, each new mischance
of the familiar shaping of body:
cause has no nobility; what pretense

of values moves the soldier to obey
an order's order, to go to cover,
to bayonet a blue coat, not a gray?

They fight best who live when fighting's over.

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IV

Pity not us, either. If we may find
signals of our own fallibility
in such endings, this will be our own end,

no one else's. Change assures there will be
symmetries, times, beginnings and returns
as leaves change once more on the living tree,

whether at Bull Run in October rains,
or by the porches of the surviving,
aware dimly of the leaves through half-dreams,

or on Cassino's hill, perhaps blowing
in gusts as leaves now blown by my window.
Change assures that, upon the earth's turning,

we also are rolled from dark to light through
dark to light again, and that when the leaves
have been drifted into the soil, when snow

blackens them, new green budding again moves
in the branch, though the branch itself is changed.
Pity not us, should some of us hold lives

(the commemorators, the self-estranged)
until as candle flame to some old men
all that is left of *our* war is imaged;

but know by you we are begun again.

—BARNEY CHILDS

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VICTOR CHAPIN

WHITE CHRISTMAS

DICK DONALDSON, who in deference to the sundown tradition of the East, was having his first drink of the day, thanked God when he sipped it that this one, unlike all other drinks he had had in Ceylon, was made not with arak, but with real English gin.

"There's someone," Mrs. Potter said, pointing. "Over there. I can introduce you to them. They speak English—after a fashion. He had a year somewhere—law or medicine—I don't know what." She led Dick to the edge of the terrace where an exquisite young couple was standing near a flaming hibiscus. They were a small, delicately made man and a smaller, more delicate woman. He was dressed in grey flannel and she in a black and gold sari. Dick was amazed at the size of the diamond she wore attached to one of her nostrils.

"Mr. and Mrs. Seniviratna," Mrs. Potter announced.

The man bowed, and the woman nodded shyly. "*Dr.* and Mrs. Seniviratna," he said softly.

"Of course. So sorry," Mrs. Potter murmured. "This is Mr. Donaldson from New York. He's only just arrived in our country."

Seniviratna bowed again, more deeply this time. "I am honored. I have been in your city. But only to touch it in passing. However, I was able to admire your great buildings and wonderful engineering feats as well as to watch your great Mr. Roosevelt, who is now so regrettably dead, as he passed in a parade. ...If we could have such great things here —such engineers and such great Mr. Roosevelts—it would not be the same sad country you now must look upon."

Dick felt moved to protest. "But now you are a free

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country, you will have these things. You will develop them for yourselves from your own people."

"Do you really think so?" asked Seniviratna. "I fear we are not worthy."

"Come along," Mrs. Potter said impatiently. "You will excuse us, Mr. Seniviratna, so nice to have you with us."

Seniviratna bowed deeply. "*Dr.* Seniviratna," he whispered.

Before they were more than a few feet beyond the hibiscus, Mrs. Potter began to talk, much too loudly. "What airs they put on," she said. "And the accent! Did you ever hear anything like it? They'd give all they possess to be rid of it. But they never can lose it. Even the best of them have it."

Dick wondered, guiltily, why Mrs. Potter who was, though she obviously did not think so, one of them, did not have the accent. Her English was perfect. But she was not the woman his friend Thistlethwaite allowed him to think she was when he told him they were going to drive south of Colombo for Christmas with the Potters. He had met Horace Potter in the hotel bar the day he had arrived in Ceylon (he had come to visit This lethwaite, a wartime acquaintance, on vacation from his job with Pan-American in Calcutta) and his reaction to Potter, who was tall, ruddyfaced, whitehaired and mustached, had been to think that here was the man people meant when they spoke of a pukka sahib. Dick knew Potter was one of the richest planters in Ceylon and when Thistlethwaite told him they were to spend Christmas at Potter Hill, he had tried to imagine what Stella Potter would be like. She would be tall, too, he thought, a faded blonde with a pink parasol. The woman who stood beside him now did have a pink parasol, but she was not a tall, commanding Anglo-Saxon with skin too pale for the tropical sun, but a small Singhalese with dark brown skin, large black eyes that were glazed and shifting, and small, pudgy hands that fluttered constantly.

She was tugging at his arm now, waving with her other hand, calling out excitedly: "There's Father Christmas! He's arrived. Time to begin the ceremonies. Come with me to the

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house. I'm sure you want another drink." She waved her hand again, this time toward the veranda, and almost immediately a gong was beaten enthusiastically, and several quick-footed servants in white coats and sarongs ran across the lawn. They flew from guest to guest, calling out some message in a strange language that Dick assumed was Singhalese. The crowd rustled and sighed as Mrs. Potter waved her hand again, this time at them. "Into the house," she shouted. "Everyone into the house." Then she took Dick's arm and added in a quiet voice: "You must forgive all this. It will soon be over and we'll have a lovely long weekend, just the ones who belong, all of us together. Won't that be nice?"

Not knowing what else to say, Dick agreed that it would be very nice and added, more sincerely: "This is such a wonderful place. I shouldn't think you'd ever leave it."

"I never do," Mrs. Potter answered faintly. "Never even for a single day." She clasped her hands together and looked away from Dick, out at the view. It was magnificent. Violent-colored vegetation rolled away before them, down several hundred feet to the hot-green sea; directly below was an oval-shaped lagoon edged by a pink beach. Drawn up on the shore, under the cocoanut palms, was a fleet of fishing boats with tattered brown sails that now gleamed amber in the failing light. Across the lagoon, purple hills rose in clusters, higher and higher until, in the distance, they became mountains; not very far beyond Potter Hill, a little way down toward the sea, there was a group of temples, and the bell-shaped domes of whitewashed dagabas glistened on all the hills.

Mrs. Potter turned away from the view. She took Dick to the house, which was a rambling, one story bungalow of no particular character. They went inside. It was dark and cool. The drawing room was very large, running the length of the house, but Dick was disappointed to find it tastelessly furnished in bamboo and teak, and the over-luminous paintings of English country scenes that hung on the walls made him shudder.

The guests were coming in slowly—cautiously, it must

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have been—in response to the summons. But Mrs. Potter seemed not to notice them. She devoted herself to Dick, finding the best place for him, seeing they were well supplied with drink. She downed two more quickly, then looked about her; her attention wandered to the far end of the room; there it focused on three Singhalese boys who were throwing darts at a target. They were of striking appearance—tall, well built, dressed all in white with shirts open at the throat and shorts that flared widely at the cuffs. "Look!" she shouted, running toward them, "our cricket heroes!" Flourishing her glass high above her head, she cried: "You wonderful creatures! Tell me, tell me, did you have a great time in Bombay?"

"Ripping!"

"Smashing!"

"Wizard!"

Mrs. Potter winked lewdly and turned to Dick. "We won the championship this year, you know. Downed India, we did, thanks to these three boys. The Gunasakera brothers," and she pointed them out one by one—"Cyril—Cecil—Claude—very much the heroes of the day."

The room was filling up, and many people came forward to greet the cricketeers. Dick, seeing the guests assembled in a smaller space, thought they looked, as they had not on the lawn, acutely foreign and strange. He became conscious of their many shades of color; of their beautiful even teeth and their unexpressive faces that told him nothing, no matter how intently he looked at them; of their odors of sandalwood and betal, and, most of all, of their all-pervading, intense quiet.

At last, Mrs. Potter took notice of her guests and waved them into chairs. She helped seat the children in orderly rows on the floor. No one spoke. The only conversation came from a group of English people that sat apart at one end of the room; and that conversation was not animated: it was low and lacking in gaiety.

When everyone was seated and settled, Mrs. Potter assumed an air of great importance and marched unsteadily to one end of the room. She stopped before high double doors, waited

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dramatically a moment, then clapped her hands. The doors flew open, and there was revealed a giant Christmas tree, ablaze with candles, heavyladen with packages. The hush became profound: no cries of admiration or deep sighs of pleasure greeted the gleaming vision. Mrs. Potter, disappointed in her effect, hurried to another door and clapped again. At this signal, the portly gentleman she had previously identified as Father Christmas rushed into the room. Attired in full Santa Claus regalia, beaming in the manner demanded by his role, shouting greetings to the children, he made a great attempt to please; but if he succeeded, it was not apparent, for the children remained immobile, politely superior to his exuberance; and their parents looked puzzled—a few giggled foolishly. Mrs. Potter, disappointed again, made a frantic gesture, and her husband ran to the phonograph and switched it on. Instantly, it obliged with a greatly amplified recording of *Adeste Fidelis* (sung by Bing Crosby). The guests listened, but with an air of somewhat pained surprise, and Dick told himself that this reaction was the same as his always was when Oriental music was played.

Undaunted, Father Christmas began to take presents off the tree, and Mrs. Potter helped him give them out to the guests. There were smiles, bows, murmurs of polite protest. The Muslim women, finding perfume in their packages, held it under their veils to sniff, then, tittering, blew kisses off their fingers to their hostess. The other women—Hindu, Buddhist, and the few Christian converts—smiled faintly at their gifts of tea towels or bags of lavender. The men made deprecating gestures as they were presented with biro pens or packages of American cigarettes. Thistlethwaite, who had been sitting in the English group, moved over to a place beside Dick.

"What do you think of it all?" he asked. "A jolly Christmas, what?"

"Are we really staying the weekend?" Dick asked.

"Oh yes. We have to. The food's good, I promise you."

"Do you really think we should? Isn't she going to be awfully drunk in a little while?"

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Thistlethwaite winced and looked away. "I shall have to stay," he said. "We could get you back if you wanted to go."

"It's all right with me. But you have warned me beforehand."

"I did not feel required to do so."

Dick, ignoring the rebuff, asked questions: "How did it happen? Where did he meet her?"

Thistlethwaite shrugged, "He met her up country," he answered. "He used to have a tea plantation, way up somewhere, that was close to an Anglican convent. She was one of their orphans."

"But why on earth did he marry her?"

Thistlethwaite snapped his reply. "I never thought it my business to ask him."

Dick scratched his head and regarded Thistlethwaite with interest. "Tell me one thing, Thistle," he said. "Why are you so sentimental about it? I shouldn't think that you as an Englishman could afford it."

"Rot," Thistlethwaite answered. "You Americans talk such blasted rot." He started to walk away; but turned back after a step. "Anyway," he added bitterly, "we're not English any more, are we? Look at this. What sort of Christmas is it? It was supposed to be us, just us, but there's hardly any of us left. So here they are... all of them... what can we do about it?" This was quite a speech for Thistlethwaite and Dick did not try to detain him when he hurried away, back to the English group, after making it.

He thought about joining the English group himself, but Mrs. Potter suddenly reappeared at his side and, clutching his arm, said: "I'm exhausted. No use trying to please these people. Take me out on the veranda for supper."

They went out. An elaborate buffet was being served on the veranda: but Mrs. Potter took no food: contenting herself with another gin, she sat beside Dick in a settee and watched while he ate from a plate balanced on his knee. A white-coated servant hovered nearby with a tray, waiting for Mrs. Potter's summons.

The night was lovely: the moon was rising over the lagoon,

—Drawing by Walter Goetz

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and there were faraway sounds of excitement as fishermen launched their boats. The air, which was cooled by a fountain that splashed in a pool at the edge of the veranda, was heavy with the exotic scent of temple flowers. The phonograph had been switched to amplifiers on the lawn and the Christian music—*Silent Night* and *White Christmas*—carried on the tropical air sounded to Dick suddenly discordant and unfamiliar.

Dick was trying to make conversation, but Mrs. Potter seemed now incoherent. She was crooning to herself and, at times, moaning. Dick wondered what he should do and looked around for Thistlethwaite or Horace Potter, hoping one of them would rescue him. There beside them he saw a small English child who was standing alone, scraping his shoes on the edge of a flagstone. He was looking at them sideways.

"Hello, kid," Dick said.

"What's the matter with Auntie Stella?" the boy demanded.

Mrs. Potter stirred. "Who is that?" she asked in a clearing voice. "Oh, it's you, Stanley dear. What are you doing there?"

"I know Daddy was Father Christmas, so it's no good telling me he wasn't," the child announced.

Mrs. Potter sighed and made a feeble attempt to deny it. Stanley, ignoring her protestations, went on scraping his shoes. "Mommie says I'm to play with the native children," he said suddenly. "She says I must to be polite."

"Of course, dear," Mrs. Potter murmured. "Mommie's right. You must go and play with them. Make them feel at home."

"But they won't play," said Stanley. He watched Mrs. Potter carefully, and when she did not answer, came closer. "What games did you play when you were my age?" he asked.

"The same ones," Mrs. Potter answered in a startled voice. "The very same ones."

"You mean the same *English* games?"

"Of course, of course," Mrs. Potter cried loudly. "The same ones. The very same ones."

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"But the native children won't play them. They just stand and stare at me." Stanley was now in tears. "I can't make them play with me."

"Yes you can. You must." Mrs. Potter was angry. "Go on," she commanded. "Make them play with you. Teach them if you have to. But make them play!"

Stanley, frightened by her sudden vehemence, moved away. Dick watched him as he walked slowly across the floodlighted lawn to a group of children who were standing motionless in the shadows. Stopping when he was still a distance from them, he made a few vague motions—meant to be encouraging—with his hands and feet. Since there was no answering motion from the children, he produced a rubber ball from his pocket that he bounced up and down. Then, desperate, he threw the ball into the midst of them. No child reached out to catch it, however, and it passed beyond them, bounced off a terrace wall, and rolled away down the hill. Stanley turned his back and walked across the lawn again. Finding his mother and father sitting apart with the other English people, he secreted himself behind his father's chair.

For some time, Dick had been vaguely conscious of a drum somewhere in the distance. Now it was louder. "What is that noise like a tom-tom?" he asked Mrs. Potter who, rumpled and strong smelling, was now slumped beside him.

"That's some girl in the village. Just became a woman. Has to beat her drum twenty-four hours. That way they know she's ready for a husband." Sighing fitfully, she added: "Poor little bitch, whoever she is."

The drum, Dick thought, for all its rhythmic pulsation, made a mournful sound. Shivering with some strange apprehension, he looked away from Mrs. Potter's bloated, dirt-streaked face. He saw Horace Potter sitting with his guests, erect, polished, laughing heartily. Mrs Potter, pulling herself up and following his look, exclaimed: "You ought to be talking to my husband. Not to me. He has such interesting stories. Such an interesting man."

"But you are interesting too," Dick said politely.

"No," she protested. "I'm dull. Just a convent girl at heart.

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But I've been a good wife. Damn good wife," Then, lowering her voice, she went on: "Horace is watching us. Please smile. Smile at me."

Dick obeyed as best he could, and Mrs. Potter patted his hand. "Thank you," she said. "Wouldn't do to let down. Horace hates it. Hates me to let down. Very important now not to let down. More important now than ever."

"I don't see why," Dick said.

"You don't understand," she answered. "These silly fools are free. They're free but they still want an example. Want it now more than ever. Who can they look to? Only to us. You don't have to be polite to them. Be as rude as you like. Only notice them, just notice them, that's all they ask." She stopped for a while, as if she had forgotten what she was talking about. Then she began again. "You know. I feel sorry for them. They're going to make such a botch of it... such a dreadful botch."

Suddenly, she rose to her feet, and swaying from side to side, looked out to sea. "Time for the big show," she proclaimed. "Time for the grand finale."

As if in response to her command, the music burst forth anew; servants hurried forward; the guests stirred. Horace Potter walked across the lawn to his wife.

"Better go in, Stella," he said gently.

"Not yet, not yet please. Not till after the fireworks."

"But you're not well, Stella."

Mrs. Potter sobbed. "You're wrong, Horace. I'm not letting down. Don't make me go in."

Horace Potter put his arm around her. "We'll stand here and watch together, dear," he said. "Then, right after it's over, you'll go in."

The display began. It was superb. Rockets, color bombs, pinwheels, roman candles burst over the lagoon in extravagant profusion. The music swelled in a mighty crescendo—*Land Of Hope And Glory* (sung by Dame Clara Butt) and then, as giant rockets exploded, *Rule Brittania!*

Unenthralled, the children watched in silence; but when a half dozen rockets were launched together and with superb

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effect but deafening sound, burst, little Stanley screamed with terror and had to be carried away into the house by his mother.

It was just then, at the climax of the display, that Mrs. Potter broke loose from her husband and, waving her arms frantically, rushed forward, shouting: "By Jesus, that will show them! That will show them who we are!"

Horace Potter caught her before she had run far, and as he led her quickly away, their slight, ubiquitous servants spread themselves round like a convoy for the voyage across the lawn.

As Dick watched the Potters disappear into the house, Thistlethwaite came up behind them. "Let's go quickly," he said. "Before they see us."

Down in the lagoon fishermen were calling to one another in a strange, ripe tongue, and as Dick and Thistlethwaite started their car, there was a far away cheer and a salvo of firecrackers from the temple yard down the hill—a small return celebration of the Christian holiday by the Buddhist monks. As if this were some special, long awaited signal, the party began to break up. The music died in the amplifiers, the floodlights went out. Suddenly, in this final moment, the guests became animated: the children dashed across the lawn, crying out as they ran; and their parents laughed loudly as they called out farewells.

Dick and Thistlethwaite drove through the dark a long time in silence. Finally, as they were coming into Colombo, Thislethwaite raised his eyes from the road and turned his head to look at Dick. "There's one thing I don't understand," he said.

"What?" Dick asked, sleepily.

It was a moment before Thistlethwaite answered; then he said: "It's certainly not my affair, but I don't understand why she hasn't been happy. She ought to have been, you know."

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LOVE SONG FOR THE FUTURE

To our ruined vineyards come,
Little foxes, for your share
Of our blighted grapes, the tomb
Readied for our common lair
Ants, we open you the cupboard;
Flee no more the heavy hand
Harmless as a vacant scabbard
Since our homes like yours are sand.

Catamounts so often hunted,
Wend your ways through town or city,
Since both you and we are haunted
By the Weird Ones with no pity.
Deer and bear we used to stalk,
We would spend our dying pains
Nestling you with mouse and hawk
Near our warmth until it wanes.

Weave across our faces, spiders,
Webwork fragile as a flower;
Welcome, serpents, subtle gliders,
For your poison fails in power.
Loathed no longer, learn your worth,
Toad and lizard, snail and eel—
Remnants of a living earth
Cancelled by a world of steel,

Whose miasmic glitter dances
Over beast's and man's sick daze
While our eyes which scorned St. Francis
Watch Isaiah's vision craze:
Ox and lion mingling breath
Eat the straw of doom; in tether
To the selfsame stake of death
Wolf and lamb lie down together.

—VASSAR MILLER

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THE MADMAN

At first, he wondered why he should be spared;
Observed, of all the windows, none was barred,
And every door swung open at a word.

The garden welcomed him; the angel's sword
Flowered before his eyes like Aaron's rod;
At first he wondered that he should be spared.

The beasts had grown so tame they hardly stirred;
The wall uncoiled its length without a guard
Where every door swung open at a word,

And trees bowed low to offer all they had.
The woman swore he was her only lord
Although, of all the windows, none was barred.

He called it Eden (but it was the world),
And so, until it was too late, ignored
The lucid glass that sealed the windows hard;

No longer troubled to pronounce the word.
But at the end, when towering clouds hurled
Boomerangs at him, and the thunder roared

At him one terrible and final chord,
He knew at last that he had not been spared,
Ran screaming from the mirror, and was mad.

—CONSTANCE URDANG

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Victor Chapin *(White Christmas)* has published two books, *The Hill* and *The Lotus Seat*, and has also appeared in *The Reporter* and *Discovery*. *The Hill* is based on experiences in a mental hospital where he worked while a conscientious objector during the war. He is now working on a novel in New York.

Pati Hill *(Ben)*, a former fashion model, is the author of two books which first appeared in part in this magazine. *The Pit and the Century Plant*, a journal of two summers spent alone in a farm cottage in central France, was published by Harper in 1955. Her novel, *The Nine Mile Circle*, will be published by Houghton Mifflin early this spring. She now divides her time between New York and France, and recently has been writing in Paris.

Hughes Rudd *(The Fishers)* attended the graduate school of the University of Minnesota and worked on a newspaper before his present job with a commercial film company in Kansas. *Harper's* and the now defunct *American* have previously published his work.

Terry Southern *(South Summer's Idyll)* has published in *Harper's Bazaar* and *New Story* as well in previous issues of THE PARIS REVIEW. A native of Texas and a one-time resident of both Paris and New York, he is now writing in Geneva, Switzerland.

INTERVIEW

Richard Goldstone is a teacher of literature and military science. He has known Mr. Wilder since 1942.

CHRONICLE

Henri Michaux *(From "Misérable Miracle")*, one of France's leading poets, is known for such books as *Plume* and *Ecuador*, as well as for his paintings. M. Michaux's translator, Mme. Louise Varèse, is the wife of the composer Edgar Varèse. She has published many translations of modern French literature.

POETRY

A. Alvarez *(The Bad Dream and the Photograph)*, whose poems published in the seventh issue of THE PARIS REVIEW have already been reprinted several times in England and America,

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recently returned from a year in the United States and is living in London, where he writes criticism for the BBC, *The New Statesman and Nation*, and other periodicals.

Edgar Bowers *(Adam's Song to Heaven)*, who teaches at Harper College in New York, published in 1956 his first volume of poems, *The Form of Loss*, with Alan Swallow.

Barney Childs *(On the Last Veterans of the Civil War)* is teaching at the University of Arizona; he devotes much of his time to composing music.

Donald Finkel *(An Aesthetic of Imitation)*, is a twenty-seven year old graduate of Columbia. His work has appeared in *Discovery* and the *Hudson Review*.

Robert Layzer *(The Sleeping Beauty)*, is a student at the Harvard Medical School. His *Cupid Aloft* appeared in No. 12 of THE PARIS REVIEW.

Robert Mezey *(In the Environs of the Funeral Home)*, now twenty-one and an undergraduate at the University of Iowa, had two poems in the *Kenyon Review* when he was eighteen.

John Miles *(Escape Story)* has published in *Listen* and other English periodicals.

Vassar Miller *(Love Song for the Future)* published a first book of poems last year.

Will Morgan *(The Tennessee Marriage)*, lives in Cambridge, Mass., where he is writing fiction and studying mathematics.

Herbert Morris *(Twenty-Seven)* is a Philadelphian. *New World Writing*, *The Sewanee Review*, and *Accent*, among other magazines, have used his work.

Constance Urdang *(The Madman)* assisted Paul Engle in compiling a Prize Stories volume last year. She is a student at Iowa.

Harold Witt *(The World is White)* is a librarian who has been published by *Poetry* and *Discovery*. His *Arachne* appeared in No. 12 of THE PARIS REVIEW.

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SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS

A directory to eating, drinking and shopping in Paris

RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND CABARETS

LEFT BANK

Maison Alaux, 106. Blvd. Montparnasse, 14e, Dan. 54–33. Established in 1910. Alaux is famous as the favorite restaurant of Lenin and Trotsky in exile. Moderate prices.

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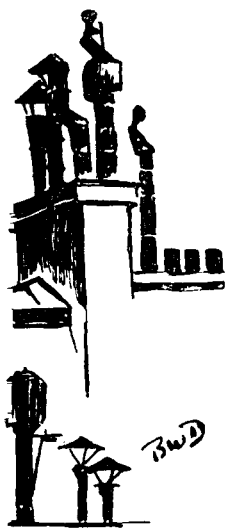
Le Monocle, 60, Blvd. Edgar-Quinet, Dan. 41–30. Le Cabaret feminin de Paris. Ambiance très originale. Attractions. Danse.

IVe République, 42, rue Jacob, 6e. A gay and promising little restaurant with a real St. Germain-des-Près flavour. French and Alsatian specialties at moderate prices.

Le Trou Madame, 3, Passage de la Petite Boucherie. "Club Privé" open to all comers, where an advanced Cha-Cha-Cha is danced between sessions of the 15th century jeu of "Trou Madame". Near the church of St. Germain-des-Pres and the Place Furstenberg.



Bar St. Thomas d'Aquin, 3, rue du Pre aux Clercs, Bab. 18–60. An intimate little hotel bar open for breakfast, afternoon tea, and drinking until 2 a.m. in stimulating Spanish atmosphere. Not expensive.

Le Tournon, Café-Tabac. A famous literary café, 18, rue de Tournon. Tel. Dan. 16–16.

Le Mas de la Chèvre d'or, 14, Blvd. St. Michel, Dan.98–16. One of the better class bar/restaurants of the quarter, where you can eat or drink until midnight in a richly decorated setting, and listen to George Schmidt at the piano.

Caveau des Oubliettes, rue St. Julien le Pauvre, One of the oldest French cabarets. Famous since 1920 for old traditional French songs. Underneath France's oldest church.

Pullman Bar, 197 rue de Grenelle, 7e, Inv. 99–77. Five minutes from Eiffel tower. Good food and music till 2 a.m. Specialités Provençales. Your Corsican host: Straboni. Not expensive.

RIGHT BANK

La Truite, 30, rue Fauborg St. Honoré, 8e, Anj. 12–86. One of Paris' most distinguished restaurants. Features delicious Norman specialties. On a picturesque court off the Right Bank's

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chief shopping street. Under the direction of the famous Marcel Dorin.

Restaurant des Arcades, 61, rue de Ponthieu, 8e. Ely 52–89. A small restaurant for those who want to eat without spending too much. Probably the lowest prices in the quartier.

Chatelet, 6, Rue Saint-Denis, Place du Chatelet Gut 42–41. A convenient, middle-priced restaurant almost next door to the Theatre du Chatelet. Excellent for meals before the show. The service is good and rapid.

Au Rocher de Cancale, 8, Rue de la Tacherie, 4e. A convenient low-priced restaurant just behind the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt. Recommended for good food before the show.

La Roseraie, 43, Ave. des Ternes, Eto. 19–28. A good restaurant. French cuisine with Italian specialties. Reasonable prices. Rendezvous for Salles Pleyel and Wagram.

Le Velay, 26, Rue St. Didier, 16. Basque specialties and special orders promptly executed. All the usual wines.

Le Relais de Chaillot, 1, Rue de Chaillot, 16e. Specialité: "vins d'origine", Bourgogne "blanc et rouge". Service until ten, the minimum 500 to 600 francs.

MONTMARTRE

Matériel pour Artistes, Peintres, *J. Weber,* 12, rue Douai, Tri. 34–85. All supplies, colours, canvas, etc., for painters.

Chez Marianne, 72, boulevard de Clichy, MON 10–81. One of the best old established restaurants in the districts. Decorated by Guy Arnoux in the true Montmartre style. "Croustillon Marianne" "Rognons de Veau flambee". Around $4.

Au Relais Normand, 32, rue d'Orsel, 18e, First class, plentiful cuisine in the best Normand tradition. Old world decor, intimate, with quick service. Moderately priced.

Chez Aglae, 9 bis Rue Pigalle, 9e. A quick-service, low priced restaurant. Italian food served "at the Bar" or in the back parlour up to midnight.

Au Tournant de la Butte, 46, Rue Caulaincourt, 18e. One of the best restaurants of the quartier, and not at all expensive.

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Chez Jeannette, 16, Rue Berthe, 18e. A tiny "Montmartais" bar and restaurant where English is really spoken. Italian specialties served till all hours. Gay, unconventional and inexpensive.

Les Fleurs, 25, Rue Duranthin. Good small restaurant with a Parisian floor-show, open from 9 p.m. till dawn.

SHOPPING IN PARIS

SHOES, D. Codre, 30, Rue Lauriston, 16e. Master shoe-maker. Ladies and gentlemen's shoes to measure. Exclusive models, accredited to "Art et Creations".

ANTIQUES, Jadis, 45, Rue de Penthievre, 8e. Metro St. Philippe du Roule. Antiques and ornaments, porcelain and silverware, of the 18th and 19th centuries.

FURNITURE, Claude Cueil, 16, Rue St. Simon, 7e. Specializes in 18th century furniture from Louis XIV to Empire. Decoration, antiques and tapestries.

STATIONERY, Papeterie de Montparnasse, Bd. du Montparnasse, next door to the Café Dome. All writing materials, pens, paper, etc. The agents for Waterman and Parker pens.

LA DAUPHINE, 94 rue de Grenelle. Fine antiques, furniture, and a wide selection of old sprints. Many beautiful objects at reasonable prices.

GALLERIES AND BOOKSTORES OF PARIS

Librairie Galignani, 224, Rue de Rivoli, Ope 56–98. The most extensive and varied stock of books in English in Paris, including many paper-bound books. New titles from England and America, art books from all countries. A bookstore equipped to meet the needs of all readers.

English Bookshop, 42, rue de Seine. New and second-hand books in English. A wide selection of the latest periodicals.

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Galerie de l'Institut, 6, rue de Seine, 6e, Ode. 32–90. Directed by Marise Levesque. Artistes contemporains et antiquités. Important collections.

Photographie Giraudon, 9 rue des Beaux Arts, 6e, Dan. 93–83. Offers you complete photo-reproduction service for the arts, history, and archaelogy. Our classification system facilitates research, expedites orders. Color transparencies, slides & prints, Ektachrome & Kodachrome.

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